

A HANDBOOK
ON
THE REVELATION.

Rev. J. Hutchinson.



1893.

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN
GRADUATE UNIVERSITY

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A HANDBOOK
ON
THE REVELATION.

BY
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Sabbath School the Nursery of the Church."

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This Book

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO


THE REV. PROFESSOR WM. D KILLEN, D.D.,

PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY'S COLLEGE, BELFAST,

WHOSE LECTURES LARGELY AIDED THE WRITER IN
THE CONSIDERATION OF THE SUBJECT OF IT.

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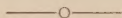
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INTRODUCTION.



IT may be asked, Why is it necessary to introduce a new Commentary on the Revelation to the reading public? Have they not Commentaries enough already on this subject, as Elliott's, Dr. Glasgow's, Dr. Murphy's, and a host of others? These are, for the most part, so large and expensive that they are inaccessible to the ordinary reader, and the present writer wishes to put into the hands of Sabbath School Teachers and Scholars, and others, a cheap and portable little volume which, at a glance, will throw light on the text and solve many a difficulty which appears already dark and mysterious, and, indeed, largely sealed to the ordinary reader.

When I was a boy, and reading this book, I was specially struck with its sublime language and figurative allusions. I thought that, above any other book in the Bible, it was the most heavenly in its conception; and that while the other books were inspired, yet that the language here was strikingly sublime. Every time I read it this was forced on me so much that it became my favourite study.

Shortly after I was ordained to the office of the ministry I began to preach a series of sermons on this book. This led me to consider it more accurately, and to consult Commentaries on it, which instructed me more and more as to its meaning. I had no intention then of writing a commentary on it; but as I had the skeletons of the sermons I preached, I began to consider that I might enlarge the notes, by

writing out in pencil a short commentary. By and by I transcribed the notes in ink, weighing, as I went along, the more critical bearing of the text with the context and how far the harmony prevailed. I always aimed at getting the mind of the Spirit. I shirked no difficulty—I gave my own opinion of the abstruse point, and tried to solve it, if solution was possible. There are many portions of the Revelation which no commentator can attempt to solve. In a few instances I have given the opinion of others, where the meaning seemed to be doubtful; but in most cases, where I differed from others, I gave an opinion of my own.

I acknowledge my indebtedness to Elliott's Commentary on this book, Dr. Glasgow's, on this book, and Rev. A. R. Faussett's; also, to Henry's, on same. I have followed none of them, except so far as I considered them correct. I have thought for myself, and where they seemed to me to depart from the meaning of the scope of the text and the mind of the Spirit, I have differed from them. I own my obligations to Eadie's *Bible Cyclopædia*; Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History*; Professor Witherow's *Apostolic Church*; Dr. Killen's *Ancient Church*; Dean Bagott's *Protestant Catechism*, &c., for reference.

I have followed the Authorised Version of the New Testament, with one or two exceptions, as the Revised Version was not published when I began the Commentary. The principal exception is in the last chapter and 14th verse, where the text reads, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life." The best critics and commentators consider that the true reading is, "Blessed are they that wash their garments," or their "robes," as the Revised Version has it, that is, in the blood of Christ. The former would imply merit on our part; the latter takes all the merit from us and gives it to Christ.

The reader will see that I have not included all the text in the body of the work. This seemed to be unnecessary, as any reader can

see the text for himself. At the beginning of the verse, or a series of verses, I have given the first few words and the last few, inserting dots to show the connexion. Also, in quoting a text, I always quoted from the Authorised Version, in the Old Testament or the New.

For the benefit of Sabbath School Teachers and Scholars, and others, who may not have much time for reading the Commentary, I have given the substance of it in the Questions and Answers appended—a new phase, I venture to say, in the way of writing Commentaries. I thought this would interest young people and Bible Classes, as they are more likely to have their attention arrested by this mode of presenting knowledge. Every teacher knows that this is the most successful way of imparting information. The lecturing teacher, in the Sabbath School, will never have apt pupils. The questioning teacher, if converted, is the one for the children. I speak from experience, for I found that when I was a pupil, and afterwards a teacher, it was the categorical form of teaching that impressed me most, and made me wiser.

The Romish system may be regarded as the great Antichrist. Every false system is an Antichrist, as Mahometanism, or Hindooism, &c., but this system seems to stand out prominently as the great Antichrist. John, in one of his epistles, says (1 John ii. 18), “Even now are there many Antichrists.” And in order to distinguish this one from the others, it may be designated as above. It has persecuted the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ more than, perhaps, any other system, and we think it deserves the appellation attached.

There is one other point worthy of notice in this book of Revelation, to which it is necessary to call attention, namely, the frequent use of the word “seven.” It speaks of “seven spirits,” “seven seals,” “seven trumpets,” “seven vials,” “seven plagues,” &c. Why does it adopt this number more than any other? We think there is a reason. Seven is the sacred number, or number of

perfection ; and as everything is perfect which God does, or comes from him, John, by the spirit of inspiration, uses it to denote the perfection of all God's work.

This little handbook, or manual, is sent forth with the prayer that it may prove a blessing to many souls, and that it may shed light on many passages which have hitherto appeared dark and mysterious. May it accomplish this end. Amen.

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This chapter is an introduction to the whole book, and contains John's address to the Seven Churches.

CHAPTER II.—(Pp. 18—33.)

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CHAPTER III.—(Pp. 34—52.)

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CHAPTER IV.—(Pp. 53—60.)

This chapter opens with an account of John's second vision, or it may be a continuance of the first. John has first a description of the Lord Jesus Christ; next, an exhibition of the great God. As the communication respecting the Seven Churches opened with a vision of Christ, as the King and Head of the Church, so the communication respecting the seals and trumpets opens with a vision of Jehovah, the maker of heaven and earth.

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between them. In the meantime, before the sixth seal ends and the seventh opens, a definite number of the Jews are sealed, and a large number of the Gentiles are represented as in heaven, "arrayed in white robes."

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This chapter gives us an account of the opening of the seventh seal and the sounding of the first four trumpets, which, we think, are designed to set forth the incursions of the Goths and Vandals, and other barbarous hordes from the North of Europe and Asia to punish a degenerate Church in the West and to accomplish the overthrow of the Western Roman Empire. The majority of expositors agree that the seven seals represent the interval between John's time and the age of Constantine the Great, and that the last three trumpets point to the rise and progress of the Man of Sin, or the great Antichrist, and the punishment inflicted by the Mahometans on a degenerate Church in the East. The Man of Sin was conceived about A.D. 486, the time of the fall of the Western Roman Empire. It rose in A.D. 606, and it was developed in A.D. 755 into the temporal power of the Papacy. (See Note at end of Chapter XIII.)

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"rod," or measuring line of the apostle; the "two witnesses;" the sounding of the seventh trumpet, or third woe trumpet; the ushering in of Christ's kingdom; the thanksgiving of the elders; and the opening of the temple in heaven.

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CHAPTER XIX.—(Pp. 288—311.)

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CHAPTER XX.—(Pp. 312—343.)

The great subject of this chapter is, we think, the Millennium, and the binding of Satan during its continuance ; the battle of Gog and Magog at the close of it ; and the final judgment of all things, when Christ comes the second time without sin unto salvation.

CHAPTER XXI.—(Pp. 344—372.)

This chapter gives us an outline of the " new heaven and the new earth ; " the New Jerusalem ; a description of the Church in her beauty ; the wall surrounding the New Jerusalem, with a grand picture of the city included ; and the happiness of the nations walking on its streets.

CHAPTER XXII.—(Pp. 393—410.)

This chapter brings before us some of the things which heaven contains for the cheering and comforting of its inhabitants ; also the angel refusing John's worship ; and the perfection and sacredness of the written word.

A HANDBOOK ON THE REVELATION.

THIS Book is supposed to have been written by John the Evangelist, in the Isle of Patmos, between the years 89 and 95 of the Christian era. He was banished there by the Emperor Domitian of Rome for his testimony to the truth, and in this lonely isle of the Ægean Sea he had this wonderful vision of the rise and progress of the Kingdom of Christ, and the future glory of the saints.

CHAPTER I.

This chapter is an introduction to the whole Book, and contains John's address to the Seven Churches.

VERSE 1.—*The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.*

It is called "the Revelation of Jesus Christ," because the Father reveals his will through him, as the Mediator, to his servants. Jesus Christ is the delegated commissioner of this Divine Revelation for the instruction of his servants or ministers, and he singles out John particularly, the beloved disciple, to whom he communicates the instruction received of the Father. Note—True ministers have their commission from Christ the King and Head of the Church, as we learn from Ephes. iv. 11, 12, "And he gave some apostles, and some prophets for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." The things contained in the Revelation must shortly come to pass, or their design is soon to be developed; and, in view of

what is coming, he will not conceal it from his servant. "He sent and signified it by his angel, unto his servant John." Note again—"All things," says Christ, "that I have heard of the Father I have made known unto you." (John xv. 15.)

The angel here was in all probability John the Baptist, who calls himself John's "fellow-servant" (chap. xix. 10) once in the body, and a connecting link between the Old Testament and the New. Such a one would be a suitable interpreter. The ministry of angels is here brought into notice, as in the case of this angel conveying the Revelation from Jesus Christ to John. How far God uses them in the way of ministering we cannot tell; suffice it to know that he does use them. Observe how the chain of God's providence has its links connected. God reveals his will to Christ, Christ to the angel, the angel to John, and John to the servants who were to come after him, both ministers and people. This chain connects God and man. The first link begins with God, and the last with man.

Note—"God hath put the treasure in earthen vessels." (2 Cor. iv. 7.) Besides, the Revelation is for his servants, ministers and people. All are to read it. "Search the Scriptures," &c. (John v. 39.)

VERSE 2—*Who bare record . . . and of all things that he saw.*

John communicates to the Church, in the form of a "record," the Revelation of the Divine will which Christ makes over to him. Christ's testimony to it guarantees its truth. Then we may be sure of the statements laid down here. It is said, "seeing is believing," and John reveals what he saw as an eye-witness, and surely we may believe his testimony. The truth is revolved, or rolled out, to John in vision, and he keeps strictly to the limits of what he saw. There were many things which were not revealed to him, for "secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever." (Deut. xxix. 29.) But he revealed as much to John as he saw for the good of the Church, and John gives a faithful record of it.

VERSE 3.—*Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.*

The blessing is here pronounced on the reading and hearing “of this prophecy.” But this is not enough; the “words” must be kept treasured up in our minds and reduced to practice in our life and conversation. James says (i. 13), “If any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass,” &c.

“The time is at hand”—that is, the time for the developing of this vision or “prophecy,” commencing with the opening of the seals, and extending through the trumpets and the vials.

VERSE 4.—*John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne.*

We are not to infer that there were no other churches in Asia Minor (for Asia Minor is here meant) than the seven; but these seven are the representatives of all the others, and are a symbol of perfection, as the “seven spirits,” and the “seven seals,” and the “seven trumpets,” and the “seven vials” are. John sends salutations of “grace and peace” to them, which proceeded from the Trinity, embodied in the expression, “from him which is, and which was, and which is to come”—meaning the Father, and the Son, and the Seven Spirits, a title of perfection for the Holy Spirit. Paul uses the same expression of “grace and peace” from the Father and the Son in Col. i. 2. And whether we are to interpret “grace” coming from God the Father as his exclusive gift—“being justified freely by his grace” (Rom. iii. 29); and “peace” from God the Son, as having laid the foundation for it in his obedience and death; or proceeding equally from both, certain it is that they are made over to us by the Holy Spirit, who renders all the blessings of the new covenant efficacious to our justification and sanctification.

VERSES 5, 6.—*And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. Unto*

him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

It seems strange that grace and truth are represented as coming from Jesus Christ, while the same blessings are set forth as coming from him, together with the Spirit, in the preceding verse. In all probability the reason is, that while there his divine nature is demonstrated, John writes here to introduce his human nature to us, that, as God-man mediator, he might open the channel for these gifts to flow down to us. Then we have him as a "faithful witness," like a prophet, to record to us the divine testimony to the very letter; like a priest, who obeyed and suffered for us, and rose as "the first begotten from the dead;" like a king, exalted "the prince of the kings of the earth," to make over to us by his Holy Spirit all the blessings he has purchased for us, and to "subdue and conquer all his and our enemies."

The meaning of "the first begotten of the dead" is, that he was the first who rose to die no more. While the widow's son of Nain, and Lazarus, rose from the dead, they died again, but Jesus Christ died no more to see corruption. Besides, by this he is the representative or the "first fruits of them that slept." And as the head rose, "all those who die in him shall God bring with him." While he showed himself to be a "faithful witness" by his word and works, including his miracles, yet his resurrection was the crowning evidence of the truth of his mission. He often professed to be the Son of God, and that his Father had sent him, but his resurrection puts the truth beyond all question, when the Father "declared him to be the Son of God, with power, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. i. iv.), thus acknowledging his sacrifice and recognising his sonship.

"Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood." His love in obeying and suffering for us is here set forth. Our sins deserved the curse of the law, banishment from God's presence for ever; but Christ washes them away in "his own blood," which "cleanseth from all sin." The criminals that deserved hell get pardon, when they believe, through the blood of the atonement.

But the sinner must be brought into contact with the blood. The blood must be sprinkled as well as shed. There must be a personal dealing of the sinner with the Saviour, that the guilt and defilement of sin may be taken away.

When Christ is represented as the agent in washing us, we must be willing to submit to the process. We become, by the Holy Spirit, a willing people in the day of God's power. Christ makes us kings and priests to God, sets us apart by his Spirit as a peculiar people, "to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." No wonder that the "glory and dominion" are to be ascribed to him for ever and ever.

"Unto God and his Father" means "unto God, even his Father." This seems to be the meaning of the phrase. It may be stated, that the two words have but a single article in the original Greek, which shows that they are not two persons, but one. See an example of the same kind—Titus ii. 13—where the original Greek has the same construction, and where "the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" means but one person, "the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ." "Amen" means so let it be. It is a kind of emphatic prayer that what was stated was true, and might come to pass. It has the meaning of verily or truly, and is frequently used by Christ when about to utter some distinct solemn truth—(see frequently through John's Gospel)—and was used by the early Christians in repeating their responses in the prayers of the Church, that the promises of God might be realised, which are all "yea and amen," in Christ Jesus. The word is Hebrew in its origin.

VERSE 7.—*Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.*

He went away at his ascension in a cloud (Acts i. 9), and he shall come again in a cloud (Acts i. 11); but when this comes shall it be at the beginning of the millennium or at the last judgment? If it be at the beginning of it, when all the saints are raised, as some say, and the wicked allowed to lie in their graves, then "every eye" cannot

see him. But if it be at the close of all things—at the final judgment—when “all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth,” &c. (John v. 28, 29); then the solution is easy, and a child can understand it.

Why the expression, “And they also which pierced him,” when all would see him? It would seem to intimate that it would strike terror to those who did so and had not repented of their sins, “that they were so soon to receive condign punishment,” and it would produce a sorrowful and holy frame of spirit in those who had repented of their sins, to think they were the subjects of pardon, yea, had received pardon from him, notwithstanding their sin against him now surrounded with such glory.

“And all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.” The same explanation may apply to this clause as to the former. The wicked “shall wail” that there is no hope for them; the righteous, that he who appears in such glory should ever have condescended to have mercy upon them. And these are tears of gratitude mingled with grief that they ever sinned against him as they did. “Even so, Amen.” Let it happen as described, and the “Amen” approves of it.

VERSE 8.—*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*

This refers to Christ, who, to designate his eternity, calls himself by the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. “The beginning” of all things, as all things were made by him (John i. 3); “the ending” of all things, as he will be our judge at the last day. (Acts x. 42.) For exposition of clause, “which is, and which was, and which is to come,” see observation on verse 4. “The Almighty.” Here is the attribute of all power invested in him, to make all and finish all.

VERSE 9.—*I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

John says to the seven churches, through the angels of the churches, afterwards introduced, that he was their

“companion in tribulation,” meaning that they were persecuted for the truth as he was. It was only by sufferance that they were permitted to exist by the heathen Roman empire. Patmos, as already stated, is an island in the Archipelago, or Ægean Sea, one of the group called Sporades. Here John had that wonderful vision which sums up the New Testament history, and gives an account of the consummation of all things.

“For the word of God,” &c., see remarks on verse 2.

VERSE 10.—*I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.*

The Lord's day means the Christian Sabbath, or the first day of the week. The Sabbath continued to be the last day of the week till the resurrection of Christ, when, in honour of this event, and to commemorate it, he, as Lord of the Sabbath, changed it from the last day of the week to the first day. (Mat. xxviii. 16.) It is confirmed by his example of meeting with his disciples on that day (John xx. 1, 19, 26); by the early disciples meeting for worship on that day (Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2); lastly, by John's being “in the Spirit” on that day. Still further is the change of the day confirmed by the fact that Pentecost, in the year our Lord was crucified, happened on that day, which was marked by the extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Counting seven Sabbaths complete (the Jewish Sabbath happens on our Saturday) “from the morrow” after the Jewish Sabbath, it brings you exactly to Pentecost, or our first day of the week. (Lev. xxiii. 15, 16.) This surely is proof positive of the change of the day from the last day of the week to the first in memory of Christ's resurrection, and points out John's Lord's day as identical with the Christian Sabbath.

“I was in the Spirit,” means that his soul was elevated to God by the Holy Spirit, probably more than on an ordinary day. This is an example to us that we should seek to have our hearts and souls largely drawn out after God, and especially so on the Lord's day, by bringing them into contact with the flame that burns in the sanctuary, the light of the preaching of the Gospel. And I think I

might venture to risk the statement, which many of God's people will be ready to endorse, that the Spirit breathes more freely on that day than on any other day of the week, thus setting his seal on the Christian Sabbath, as at Pentecost.

"And heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet." The voice of the trumpet calls attention to the vision, and the loud sound particularly arrests that attention.

VERSE II.—*Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last : and what thou seest, write, in a book, and send it unto the seven churches, which are in Asia ; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelp'phia, and unto Laodicea.*

The voice was that of the Lord Jesus Christ, called by this name, as already explained, saying to him, "What thou seest write in a book," that it may not be lost or forgotten. It is of importance, and of use to all coming ages, let it not be ephemeral, or a mere transitory vision. John has here authority from the King and Head of the Church, to write what he saw ; and when some plead for inspiration still, and say—"Why may a book not now be inspired, as of old ?" We answer,—Where does God say to any now, as to John and Moses, "write it in a book" ? This teaches that John was inspired, being commissioned and qualified for the work.

"And send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia," &c. The question arises—How could he get it sent from this lonely isle ? who is the messenger by whom to despatch it ? Dr. Killen, in his *Ancient Church*, solves the problem—that the ministers of the seven churches were on a deputation to John, to minister to his wants, as a brother in tribulation, and they could carry the message, each to his respective church ; and it is written for their admonition, as well as for all coming ages.

VERSE 12.—*And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned I saw seven golden candlesticks.*

John, naturally, anxious to get a glimpse of the speaker, whose voice had so arrested his attention, turns round for this object. Immediately he sees one represent-

ing the glory of Christ in his heavenly effulgence “in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.”

The “seven golden candlesticks” are typical of the truth, or the purity, of the truth that should shine out from these churches, and of all others of which they are the representatives—and probably typical of the perfection of the truth lodged in them for the conversion of the world. The seven branches from the candlestick in the Tabernacle were representative of giving perfection of light, and may not the light from these “seven,” mean not only its purity as “golden,” but its perfection—that the Church that Christ left has sufficient light and truth in it for the conversion of sinners and the edification of saints? and that we need no new machinery for the conversion of the world? When Jesus ascended on high, “He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” (Ephes. iv. 11, 12.)

VERSE 13.—*And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.*

We have here—1. Christ's *position*, among the candlesticks. As the Head of the Church he is the centre of influence; and as the sun in the midst of the planets, around which they revolve, and from which they get their light and heat, so Christ is in the midst of the Church, deriving all its glory from him, all its light and heat. Also from him come all its officers and ordinances.

2. We have his *likeness*; “like unto the Son of man.” As a man he obeyed and suffered in our room and stead. He must be God to atone for the offence committed against an infinite God. He must be man to suffer in the same nature that sinned, for without shedding of blood is no remission; and he is represented, in the eleventh verse and here, in these two capacities, just such a Saviour as we need, and having all the qualifications for the great work he undertook.

3. We have his dress, “clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.”

This represents him as a *priest*, with the high priest's vestments (Exod. xxviii.), which Josephus says reached down to the foot. This clothing typifies, in all probability, the righteousness which, as a priest, he hath wrought out by his obedience and suffering in his life and in his death for us, and which is unto all and upon all them "that believe." We have the completeness of the garment—it is "down to the foot," teaching us that as we are defiled from foot to head (Is. i. 6) this garment covers our nakedness; and, clothed in this surety-righteousness of her great high priest, the Church will appear before him on the great day of reckoning, "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." He is "girt about the paps with a golden girdle." This was that in the high priest's dress which prevented the breast-plate, containing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on his heart, from falling off. And this gives us the idea of the Lord Jesus Christ, in his priestly capacity, as holding the names of his people whom he has redeemed so near his heart that they cannot be separated from him. He loved them with an everlasting love, and in the fulness of time he redeemed them; and now he holds them close to his heart, manifesting the care he has over them, and the interest he takes in them.

But it is "a golden girdle." The idea likely is, that as gold contains nothing of dross or alloy, but is perfectly pure, so the "golden girdle," by which his people are kept so near his heart, represents the purity of his perfect righteousness, as the ground of their justification, without any mixture of their own joined to it. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood. (Rom. iii. 24, 25.)

VERSES 14-16.—*His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow as the sun shineth in his strength.*

We have here a seven-fold description of Christ, which sets forth his perfection.

1. "His head and his hairs as white as wool," represent his *antiquity*. "His goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." (Mich. v. 2.)

2. "And his eyes were as a flame of fire." His eyes are represented as keen and penetrating, like a *judge*. As the fire is scorching, so his eyes, as a judge, see our innermost faults. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

3. "And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace." His throne is established in righteousness. "Righteousness is the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." The fine brass, refined by the furnace, gives us the idea of his *purity*, as the "golden girdle," already mentioned. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is nothing in him but purity. The pillars of his throne, as a judge, are founded on purity and truth.

4. "And his voice as the sound of many waters." Here we have him in the character of a *prophet*. His voice calls loudly to sinners to believe and repent. "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man." (Proverbs viii. 4.)

5. "And he had in his right hand seven stars." This sets forth that *he holds the true ministers in his hand*. These "seven stars," as we are told in the last verse of this chapter, "are the angels of the seven churches." The salutation, at the 4th verse, is to the "seven churches." Christ is at the head of the Church, and at the head of its angels, or messengers, for when "He ascended on high" (Ephes. iv. 11), "He gave some apostles," &c. The Lord Jesus Christ left a Church on earth, and the succession of her ministers, as this text tells us, is not dependent on man, or on apostolic succession, but on Christ, its living head, who can raise up and qualify, by his grace and spirit, true ministers "for the work of the ministry and the edifying of the body of Christ." The Apostles had no successors as such, and could have none. They were raised up extraordinary and plenipotentary; and the fact that the twelve, or the seventy, are never found together ordaining a successor, is against the assumption that they had successors endowed with the same power as themselves. You might as well attempt to trace your genealogy up to Noah, through an unbroken series of lawful marriages, as trace apostolic succession up

to the time of the Apostles. This apostolical succession is a figment which has come down to us through Rome, and is as muddy as the Tiber which passes through the city. At the beginning of the Great Schism (A.D. 1378) which lasted 30 years, there were two Popes, Urban VI. in Italy, and Clement VII. at Avignon, in France. Urban having displeased his cardinals, they revolted from him, and constituted Clement as Pope, in France. These two continued to hurl anathemas at one another. In A.D. 1409, the Council of Pisa appointed Alexander VI. as Pope, who denounced the other two then reigning. These refused to submit to his jurisdiction. And now, there are three Popes hurling anathemas, the one at the other. we ask, who is the real Pope? and through which of them does the apostolic succession come? And, if we go back farther, the stream is even more muddy. Granting that Peter was the first Pope of Rome, no one can tell who succeeded him. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, says that Linus was the next after him; Tertullian, equally as learned, says that Clement was the next: the fact is, there is a blank in the Pope's genealogy, which all the world cannot fill up.

Blessed be God, the Christian Church does not depend for its existence upon an uninterrupted succession of bishops. If so, she had been long since dead and buried. Does the British nation depend for its existence upon the uninterrupted succession of the Royal family? No; when the Stuarts had forfeited their right to reign it cast them off, and appointed a new successor from the house of Hanover, William III. So, if all the ministers of the Church became renegade, she could rise in her might and appoint successors in their stead; for it is the Spirit of God alone who can make a true minister, and keep up the apostolic succession.

It may be remarked farther, that these angels, represented by the "seven stars," are not Diocesan Bishops, as some say, nor constant Moderators of Presbytery, as others say, but simply messengers, or ministers, from the Churches of Asia Minor, to comfort John in his lonely exile, and minister to his wants. Just as Epaphroditus (Phil. ii. 25) was sent by the Philippians to minister to Paul's wants in Rome, so these were sent as angels, or

messengers, to minister to John's wants. John had long resided at Ephesus, and was well known to the churches there, and, as an evidence of their interest in their aged minister, they send him consolation by these delegates. Indeed the word angel literally means a messenger, as John the Baptist, sent to announce Christ's coming, is called God's "messenger," or angel (Greek, Luke vii. 27).

6. "And out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword." This means the *Gospel, which cuts keenly*. It is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword," &c. (Heb. iv. 12), but it has this advantage, that it heals as well as wounds—"He sent his word, and healed them." (Psa. cvii. 10.) As an anatomist's knife, it lays bare the sins and corruptions of man, yet points to the remedy—"The Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." The Gospel is here represented as a sword, with two edges, meaning that in whatever direction it goes, east, west, north or south, it cuts or subdues the nations to King Jesus, and brings every thought into obedience to him.

7. "And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." This represents the *glory* of Jehovah-Jesus: his countenance shines with splendour as the sun. In the 17th chapter of Matthew's Gospel we get a glimpse of his glory on the mount of transfiguration, where his face shines as the sun, his human nature, for the time being, failing to veil his divinity. We cannot look on the sun for any time in his brilliancy without being dazzled with the sight; what must it be to gaze on Christ's glorified humanity, sparkling with the rays of divinity, and to see him as he is? Moses, when he came down from the mount (Exod. xxxiv.) had to put a veil on his face when speaking to the people, the skin of his face so shone; and if the reflexion of his face so shone for a time, how bright and glorious must Christ's face be? and how bright and glorious must those faces be, which gaze on his countenance throughout an endless eternity? "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John iii. 2.)

VERSES 17, 18.—*And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not ; I am the first and the last : I am he that liveth, and was dead ; and, behold, I am alive for evermore Amen : and have the keys of hell and of death.*

We have here his condescension.

1. In raising John up. John had been so overwhelmed with the vision that, like Daniel (Daniel x. 8) there was no strength in him—he was “as dead.” But the casting down is the preparation for the raising up. Christ “laid his right hand upon him,” as the token of approval and the token of soothing him.

2. In comforting him. “Fear not ; I am the first and the last.” Thus does Christ sympathise with him in his troubles, and thus he teaches us a lesson that he will not desert his people in the time of their deep trouble.

3. In instructing him. Not only does he comfort him, but he instructs him who he is, “I am the first and the last.” This teaches the doctrine of his divinity, that he is from everlasting to everlasting, the Father’s equal and the Father’s fellow ; both able to comfort, and “able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.” Further, he instructs John as to his humanity, “I am he that liveth and was dead.” This teaches that he had human nature like ourselves, and a body in which to die, for “without shedding of blood there is no remission.”

Further, he instructs John as to his resurrection, “I am alive for evermore.” Then it is not a dead Saviour that we have, but a living Saviour—one who can hear us, one who can sympathise with us in all our sufferings, one who ever liveth to make intercession for us.

Lastly, he instructs John as to his sovereignty, “And have the keys of hell and of death.” He has all power, both in heaven and on earth, to open and close as he thinks proper. Truly, “His kingdom ruleth over all.” (Psa. ciii. 19.)

The “Amen” sets his seal on the truth of his statments. They are genuine, and can be relied on, as the word of him who is “King of kings and Lord of lords.”

VERSE 19.—*Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.*

And now, as the King and Head of the Church, and for the benefit of the Church, he says to John, "Write the things which thou hast seen." I inspire you by my authority to note, or "write," these things for the benefit of my Church in all ages, and in all coming generations. Some will say, "May not men now be inspired as well as prophets and apostles of old?" We answer, where has God said to Baxter or Bunyan, or any other modern writer, as he did to John here, "Write the things which thou hast seen"? or to Moses (Exodus xvii. 14), "Write this for a memorial in a book"? The canon of inspiration is complete, and we are to expect no new revelation. "To the law and to the testimony," &c. (John viii. 20.)

"The things which thou hast seen," refer to the vision, beginning at the 12th verse. "The things which are," refer, probably, to the several epistles to the churches, in the second and third chapters following; and "the things which shall be," to the series of events from chapter iv., including the four beasts, the seven seals, the seven angels, the seven trumpets, and the seven vials.

VERSE 20.—*The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, &c.*

The word "mystery" would appear to be connected with the preceding verse, and especially with the word "write." "Write the mystery of the seven stars," &c. Indeed Paul frequently calls the Gospel a mystery (Eph. vi. 19); and even Christ himself does so (Mark iv. 11); and likely the word "mystery" here also refers to the Gospel, under the symbolic language of "the seven stars, and the seven candlesticks, and the seven churches."

When it is said, "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches," the meaning is that they represent the angels or ministers, who are to shine as the stars, to whom the Gospel is committed; and the same of "the seven candlesticks." The Gospel ministers are to let the light shine, as stars and candlesticks. No one would for a moment imagine that the "seven stars" are literally "seven angels," and yet some will insist, when Christ

says, "This is my body" (Matt. xxv. 26), that the bread literally became his body. This would destroy all language. You might as well say that when Christ here asserts, "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches," they become literally so. The language in the two cases is exactly parallel; and if it would destroy the meaning of the latter to interpret it literally, as much would it destroy the meaning of the former to do so. Taking these two in their figurative sense, the meaning is plain: the stars represent the angels of the seven churches; so the bread represents Christ's body, and the wine his blood.

Besides, every sacrament must have a sign and a thing signified. If the bread is transubstantiated, or changed, into the thing signified, the sign is lost, or becomes the thing signified, and the true nature of a sacrament is destroyed.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER I.

1. Why is it called the Revelation of Jesus Christ?—Because the Father reveals his will through him as Mediator to his people.

2. Who is the angel here mentioned?—Probably John the Baptist, as a connecting link between the Old Testament and the New, once in the body, and a fellow-servant of John, the writer of this book. It is likely he would be employed in this vision also.

3. What is meant by the expression, "The time is at hand"?—The time for the developing of this vision or prophecy.

4. What is meant by "the seven spirits"?—A title of perfection for the Holy Spirit. As the number seven is a number of perfection, the Holy Spirit is designated thus, implying perfection.

5. Why is Jesus Christ called "the first begotten of the dead"?—Because he was the first who "rose to die no more"—"no more to see corruption"—as "the first fruits of them that slept."

6. How is it that "all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him"?—The wicked shall wail that there is no hope for them. The righteous shall wail that he should have condescended to have mercy on them. But their tears are tears of joy, pushing aside those of grief.

7. What is meant by, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day"?—I was in a spiritual mood, or elevated to heaven in vision, on that day.

8. Who were the angels of "the seven churches"?—The ministers of these churches who, as Dr. Killen says, in his *Ancient Church*, were in a deputation to John in this lonely isle, to minister to his wants.

9. Whose voice was this that spoke to John, "as of a trumpet"?—The voice of God, probably the second person of the Trinity.

10. What is meant by the "two-edged sword"?—The Gospel, which cuts like a sword at false doctrine; but heals as well as wounds." (Psalm cvii. 20.)

11. What is meant by Christ having "the keys of hell and of death"?—It means his sovereignty, to open and close as he thinks proper.

12. How are "the seven stars the angels of the seven churches"? and "the seven candlesticks the seven churches"?—The seven stars represent the angels, or messengers, as unfolding the light of truth to those over whom they are set: and the seven candlesticks represent the churches as giving light, like a candlestick on a high place.

CHAPTER II.

THIS chapter introduces to us the epistles to the seven churches. In the former chapter John tells us what he had seen ; now he proceeds to give us an account of the present state of these churches, in whose interest he had a great concern, having come from them. We have, in the first seven verses, the messege sent to Ephesus.

VERSE I.—*Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write : These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.*

The angel, or minister, of the church of Ephesus is the first addressed, as Ephesus was the most important city of all the seven, being the metropolis of Ionia, and the most celebrated and opulent of Asia Minor. It contained the temple of Diana, one of the seven wonders of the world. (Acts xix. 28.) Here Paul spent two years and three months, preaching in the synagogue and disputing in the school of Tyrannus. (Acts xix. 8, 10.) And from this place he called for the elders to come to him to Miletus, giving them the charge how they were to conduct their ministry. (Acts xx. 17, 28.)

“ These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand.” Christ, as the King and Head of the Church, holds or rules its officers, they being dependent on him for light and guidance and success in their ministry. The “ right hand ” is the emblem of strength, and so they are not left to themselves, but are held, or ruled, by the right hand of Omnipotence.

“ Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.” Jesus Christ not only rules the ministers of his church, but walks in their midst, thereby supplying the oil of his grace and spirit to give them light. As in Zechariah’s vision (chap. iv.) the oil was supplied to the golden candlestick to keep it constantly burning by the two olive trees beside it ; so here the candlestick, or the light reflected

from the preaching of the Gospel in the sanctuary, is kept constantly burning by the presence of him who was "anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows." (Heb. i. 9.)

VERSE 2.—*I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.*

This church is commended here for her labour and patience, and, under her trials, holding sound doctrine. "Thou canst not bear them which are evil." And, in the second place, for detecting what was false and spurious, "Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." There were false teachers, as Simon Magus, and the followers of the Gnostics, who held the eternity of matter, and that it was essentially evil, and denied that the Son of God could become incarnate, and take to himself that which was, in their estimation, so positively bad. Against this heresy John specially directs his Gospel, proving, in the first chapter, that Jesus Christ was not only the Son of God, but that he became incarnate.

VERSE 3.—*And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.*

This verse sets forth her perseverance, as well as her labours under trials—"hast not fainted." It is not enough to begin well, we must end well. "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved."

VERSE 4.—*Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.*

Here she is reproved for coldness that has crept upon her—"thou hast left thy first love." Christians and Christian churches should beware of coldness or lukewarmness creeping in. It is like the worm at the root of Jonah's gourd, and should be counteracted at once. It creeps on us by worldly-mindedness, or by yielding to temptation;

and the best way to strike at the root of it is to be much in prayer, that the flame that is waning may be fanned again. Christ said to his disciples in the garden of Gethsemane, "Pray ye that ye enter not into temptation, the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." And, if they had acted on his advice, it would have kept Peter from denying him, and the rest from forsaking him.

VERSE 5.—*Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*

The only safe remedy for individuals and churches, when they have gone astray, is to return to the right path; and the sure mode of acting is, when we have fallen into sin, to remember the doom of the backsliders—"If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him" (Heb. x. 38), to confess it, to bring it to the blood of the atonement, which cleanseth from all sin, and the cloud that hides God's countenance from shining on our head will be removed, and we shall again walk in the light of his countenance. (1 John i. 9.)

"And do the first works." The first works that man has to do, when he has fallen, is to examine the cause of his declension—what was the sin that led to it—and at once, or first and foremost, bring that sin to the blood of sprinkling by the aid of the Holy Spirit, and have it wiped out. If this is neglected, the threat is, "I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent." If we have got light to distinguish between good and evil, to keep us out of darkness, then we may be justly left to the consequences of abiding in darkness, or having our candlestick removed, if we allow that light to be obscured by sin.

VERSE 6.—*But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.*

Some say that the Nicolaitanes derived that name from Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch, one of the seven deacons. (Acts vi. 6.) But this is not likely, as we don't learn that

ever this man fell into the immoral practices which this sect was guilty of. They were a sect of sensualists, who, while professing Christianity, indulged the appetites of the flesh, instead of mortifying them, and their conduct brought a disgrace on Christianity.

VERSE 7.—*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*

This teaches the duty of attending on the worship of God. Faith comes by hearing (Rom. x. 17), and if men wish to have faith—without which they cannot be saved—they must give ear to “what the Spirit saith unto the churches,” or the word set forth in the churches. The Spirit, as the agent, communicates God’s message to churches through the instrumentality of preaching—that is to say, uses the Gospel as the means of the conversion of sinners and the edification of saints. (1 Pet. i. 22, 23.) Sinners are not only saved through the instrumentality of the truth, but they are sanctified by means of the truth. (John xvii. 17.)

“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life.” There is a contrast between the man that overcomes and the Nicolaitanes, who gave themselves up to the lusts of the flesh; the first gets the “tree of life.” He that conquers, or overcomes, by the grace of God, these evil propensities, and all other temptations, shall “eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” This leads our thoughts back to the tree of life in the midst of the garden of Eden. It pointed out to Adam that if he overcame by being obedient to the injunction that God laid on him, and did not yield to temptation, he would get life for ever. So whoever “overcometh” now, through the blood of the Lamb, shall enjoy the paradise of God, or a life eternal in heaven beyond the grave.

VERSE 8.—*And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These things saith the First and the Last, which was dead, and is alive.*

Smyrna was a seaport town of Ionia, in Asia Minor, about 39 miles north of Ephesus. It possessed a large

and commodious harbour for shipping, which rendered it a commercial city of great importance. It was considered the most beautiful city in Asia Minor, and was the birth-place of the Greek poet, Homer. A Christian church at an early period was founded here, and though its members were much persecuted—so much so that the famous bishop, Polycarp, was one of its martyrs in A.D. 167—they must have been faithful in all their trials, for they have not, in this narrative, a word of reproof addressed to them.

“These things saith the First and the Last, which was dead, and is alive.” (See explanation on Chap. I. 18.)

VERSE 9.—*I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich,) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.*

The members of this church of Smyrna were not only persecuted in the ten Pagan persecutions, but they were poor. Then poverty and Christianity generally went together. They have often been twin sisters, and, as a consequence, have often been persecuted and suffered together.

“But thou art rich.” This must refer to spiritual riches, and it is a consolation that though churches may be poor, yet they may be “rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him.” (James ii. 5.)

“And I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.” The Pharisees and Sadducees called themselves Jews; Christ calls them “the synagogue of Satan.” The word “Satan” means an adversary, and when they are addressed thus, they are the adversaries of the Church. They refused to recognize the Lord Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church; hence they that are not with him are against him, and on the side of the adversary.

VERSE 10.—*Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

John puts the believers here on their guard, that they may expect suffering, but he prescribes the antidote—"Fear none of these things." He that is with you is greater than he that is against you. The adversary may be let loose against you for a time, but it is of short duration—"Ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." This, in all probability, refers to the ten Pagan persecutions which continued under Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius, Severus, Maximin Decius, Gallus, Valerian, Aurilian, and Diocletian, from A.D. 66, till A.D. 312. At length the Christians got toleration under the Emperor Constantine, in the latter year. In those persecutions, and others, the encouragement is—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." This is a wise and beneficent provision of God, that in the trials there are the promises. If it were not for this, his people would sink beneath them, and even shrink from them before they come; but "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," deadens the sting in the wound, and cheers in the face of trials. The faithfulness, if necessary, must be unto "death," but the "crown" will more than compensate for the cross.

VERSE 11.—*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.*

(See for explanation of the first clause, that on verse 7.)
 "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." He that gets the victory over the persecutions, through Christ the Captain of his salvation and the comforting presence of the Holy Spirit, shall never experience the pains of hell, which are meant here by the "second death."

VERSE 12.—*And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges.*

The third of these messages, or epistles, is addressed to the church at Pergamos. Pergamos was a city, the capital of Mysia, not far from the Hellespont, which

separates Asia from Europe. It was once famed for a library containing 200,000 volumes, which were afterwards transferred to the Alexandrian library in Egypt. Here in Pergamos parchment was first invented, and made use of to write upon, as Ptolemy, king of Egypt, had refused to allow the exportation of papyrus, the bark of the rush which grew on the banks of the Nile, lest the library of Pergamos should rival that of Alexandria.

"These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges." (See for exposition, Chap. I. 16.)

VERSE 13.—*I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is : and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.*

Christ first commends what is good in this church, that though dwelling among much evil—"Where Satan's seat is,"—still she clung to the name of Jesus, and held fast his mediatorial work as the only ground of the sinner's salvation, and contended earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, in the face of martyrdom, which had a tendency to make them shrink from acknowledging his name. Even though Antipas was slain among you as my martyr, it did not make you relax your grasp on the "Rock of Ages," or let go the "anchor of your faith." Whether Antipas was a real personage or the representative of other martyrs, makes no difference as to the meaning ; it is evident that martyrdom had taken place among them.

VERSE 14.—*But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.*

Here Christ blames them because they retained the doctrine of Balaam. Here are two glaring sins charged to their account—idolatry and fornication. No wonder that Satan's seat was there when they yielded him such homage and practised such actions. The reference is to Numbers xxv. 2, 3, where the children of Israel joined themselves to

Baal-peor, the idol god of the Moabites, partaking of the sacrifices offered to him, and participating with their heathen neighbours in idolatry. Not only that, but they participated in the immoral practice connected with the worship of this deity—"fornication." Balaam, the false prophet whom Balak, king of Moab, called to curse the children of Israel, encouraged the king in these idol sacrifices. (Num. xxiii. 14, 15.) These things constitute the "stumbling-block" of the text, and are the cause of the anger which God had against Pergamos, because she retained them in her midst. And as there was a danger of the Israelites being allured into such practices by communion with the idolators and fornicators, so the people of Pergamos are warned against the leaven of this false doctrine, and reproved for still retaining it in their midst. Lesson—We are warned by this to shun all appearance of evil, and to come out and keep separate from everything that contaminates. Keeping company with evil doers has a tendency to allure us into their sin. Let us avoid their company if we would avoid their sin.

VERSE 15.—*So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.*

(See on verse 6.)

VERSE 16.—*Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.*

The apostle warns the church against these practices, and calls her to repentance of her sin, lest she incur God's righteous indignation. To "fight against her with the sword of my mouth," means to bring upon her, for her sins, all the judgments pronounced in the Word of God, which is the "sword of his mouth."

VERSE 17.—*He that hath an ear To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.*

The first clause has been explained already. The hidden manna means, we think, the enjoyment of Christ himself in the upper sanctuary. The allusion is to the manna which fed the Israelites in the wilderness, and Christ is "the living bread which came down from heaven," and "he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever." (John vi. 51, 58.) Though Christ is now unseen, yet he that overcometh shall enjoy this hidden manna to the full. Here he has foretastes of its nourishing properties; there, in heaven, he shall enjoy it in its full fruition.

The "white stone" means the token of approval. This refers, likely, to the custom that prevailed in ancient times of trying criminals. Like our jury, those that were for condemning the prisoner threw into an urn a black stone, those that were for acquitting him threw in a white stone; and if the number of the latter exceeded the former, the criminal was acquitted. God says, I will give him overcoming the "white stone" in token of acceptance. He deserved to die on account of his sins, but by faith he rolled them all over on his surety, the Lord Jesus Christ, who suffered the punishment due to them, and now he stands acquitted on the ground of a righteousness that has satisfied my law and justice, and I give him the "white stone" in token of my approval.

"And in the stone a new name written." The "new name written" in the stone refers, likely, to the custom that prevailed at the Olympic games in Greece, of writing the name of the victor on the prize he had obtained. Probably the two customs were before the Apostle's mind when he penned the passage. It is observable here that it is not the name the person had before that is "written," but a "new name." He is no longer his former self, in the character of an unconverted man. He has got his *state* changed in Justification, by believing in Christ; he has got his *nature* changed in Sanctification, by the Holy Spirit, by whom he has been enabled to overcome his spiritual enemies; and now he has got the *new name* in Adoption, by being admitted into God's family—"I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. vi. 18.)

“Which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” The seed of grace is hidden within those who are the subjects of it, except in so far as it is seen in outward conduct. “What man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him.” (1 Cor. ii. 11.)

VERSE 18.—*And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write : These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass.*

Thyatira was situated on the borders of Mysia and Lydia, and was founded by a colony of Macedonians. A Christian church was built up here, but, like Pergamos, there were tares mixed with the wheat, and the Apostle John is directed by Christ to send an epistle to her, commending her good deeds, but, at the same time, disapproving of the leaven still retained in her community. Some of the characteristics of the Son of God are given here which are noticed already in Chap. I. 15, 16.

VERSE 19.—*I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and and thy patience, and thy works ; and the last to be more than the first,*

“Faith is the inward principle, the others the outward manifestations. Faith “works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world.” And why? because it takes hold of Christ’s righteousness, or obedience unto death, which is the ground of the sinner’s salvation. “The last more than the first,” means that, instead of receding from her first love, like Ephesus, her “last works are more than her first”—she is increasing in Christian zeal. Wherever love wanes, as in the church at Ephesus, works wane also—a lesson that we should never let our love cool. As the barometer is the sign of a rising or a falling atmosphere, so we may measure our zeal for Christianity by the rising or falling of our love.

VERSE 20.—*Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezabel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.*

The charge here against Thyatira is, that she suffered Jezebel, or the representatives of Jezebel, to have still a standing within her as a church. Those representing that wicked woman would eat into her as a cancer, and corrupt her purity as a festering sore. They seduced into "fornication," and into the eating "of things sacrificed to idols." Jezebel, in the text, is typical of the sins she practised. She was the wife of wicked Ahab, who seduced Israel to sin. Instead of Thyatira harbouring in her bosom the sins that led to the overthrow of the ten tribes, when they were carried captive by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria (2 Kings, chap. xvii.), she should have cast her and her sins out. It is dangerous to play with fire and not get burnt. It is dangerous to tamper with sin and not be allured by it. Let us learn to cast everything out of our midst, and from our hearts, which is evil—"Evil communications corrupt good manners."

VERSE 21.—*And I gave her space to repent of her fornication ; and she repented not.*

The meaning, likely, is that Christ gave the representatives of Jezebel, who had taken up their abode in this church, time "to repent." These were, we think, Judaism and Gnosticism, which latter taught that there might be faith with an evil conscience. Paul refutes such a theory in regard to Gnosticism (1 Tim. i. 19), "holding faith and a good conscience." To this latter creed belonged Simon Magus, who thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money (Acts viii. 18, 20) ; and Hymeneus and Philetus, who said that the resurrection was past already (2 Tim. ii. 17, 18). The Jews got time for repentance before their overthrow by the Romans, about 40 years after Christ's death ; and Gnosticism time for repentance before it developed into Mahometanism.

VERSE 22.—*Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.*

Here is the doom of the representatives of Jezebel, or that system of which Jezebel was the founder, and of all

who are sharers in her guilt—a lesson to come out from everything which is evil, to be “separated, to touch not the unclean thing;” and God has promised to be a Father unto us, and we shall be his sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.)

VERSE 23.—*And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.*

The doom consists in death, the severest punishment, and one most dreaded by the living; “Yea,” says Job, “all that a man hath will he give for his life.” When the punishment of death is inflicted for a crime, it has an appalling effect; it calls attention to the authority of the judge who has power to inflict it. And so here, it would arouse the churches to the claim that Jesus Christ, as Judge, has upon them, and warn them against giving their hearts to other gods, and retaining within them the immoralities incident to their worship, and urge them to give their love to Christ, who has power to search the heart, and “give unto every one according to their works.” This teaches the Divinity of Christ, who can exercise the prerogative which belongs to God alone, and see and know the innermost recesses of the soul. The word “search” signifies the most minute investigation. As a candle, when it is lighted, shines and searches into every nook and corner, so Christ searches every crevice of the heart, and nothing is hid from his omniscient eye.

The expression, “I will give unto every one of you according to your works,” means that, so far as the wicked are concerned, they get the reward of their deeds, for it is not an arbitrary punishment that Christ, as the Judge, inflicts on them, but they are punished for their sins. But with regard to the righteous, they are rewarded, not on account of their works, which would be subversive of the whole Gospel system (Titus iii. 5, 7), but according to their works,” that is to say, getting a higher or lower place in heaven, as they have been more or less faithful in the trust committed to them, and in the cause of their Master, Christ Jesus. We get to heaven on the ground of Christ’s

righteousness, or his obedience, laid hold on by faith (Rom. v. 19; iv. 24), and the outcome or evidence of this faith is good works, which can only spring from our union to Christ.

VERSE 24.—*But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.*

The word “you” refers to the minister, or messenger, of the church of Thyatira, whom Christ is addressing through John, and “the rest,” those who kept free from the false doctrine and false practice—the idolatry and fornication—which the representatives of Jezebel practised. So vile was their conduct that it is called “the depths of Satan”—Satan’s ingenuity, or masterpiece of wickedness. It was so well known as a piece of diabolical cunning, that it seems to have passed into a proverb, “as they speak.”

“I will put upon you none other burden,” says Christ to the messenger and the “rest,” through John. They had had enough to bear already of labours and trials, as recorded in the 19th verse, exclusive of being mixed up with the parties who practised the deeds of the 20th verse, and as their Lord and Master is still tender, and not willing to break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax, he says, “I will put upon you none other burden.” This is just characteristic of Christ, and shows that he is the speaker of the text.

VERSE 25.—*But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.*

Whatever good was in them, through the power of God’s grace, let them retain it. There is a tendency to wrench it from them, amid so much that is vile and debasing. Let them hold it with the grasp of a drowning man, that Christ may find it when he comes. The expression, “till I come,” means when he comes to call us to an account for the deeds done in the body. He compares himself, in one of the Gospels (Luke xix. 12), to a nobleman going into a far country, who ordered his servants to trade on the money he left them—“Occupy till I come.” So he gives

us talents and opportunities, and expects us to make the most of them. In a word, whatever we have got, to hold it fast, and not let Satan or the world rob us of it. And he expects us, as he did the servants to whom the pounds were committed, to return the same with "usury."

VERSE 26.—*And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations.*

He that holds whatever I have committed to his trust unto the end, against all the opposition to despoil him of it by seducers and persecutors and false teachers, "I will give power" to him "over the nations," that is, he shall influence the nations for good, and sway them by the power of a holy example to look to King Jesus. What influence for good has the backslider, or the man who is only religious by fits and starts, over the nations?

It is the steady light of the sun by day, and the mellow influences of the moon by night, which ripen the grain for the sickle, and make it fit for the granary. So it is the steady, constant influence of the holy and pious lives of Christians that have "power over the nations," to allure them to Christ. While it is specially the work of the Gospel to lead sinners to the Saviour, and influence the world for good, yet the lives of Christians are a powerful factor to this end, and a daily sermon before their eyes; and many are attracted by this latter who will not come to hear the Gospel. It has been well said, "the Christian's life is the world's Bible," and if so, Christians should preach by their lives as well as ministers by their words to produce this "power."

VERSE 27.—*And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.*

He that preaches by his life, day by day, and by his good example, "shall rule" the nations "with a rod of iron." It is as effectual to subdue the nations unto King Jesus as the "rod of iron" to break the potter's vessel. They have no power to stand against it, for it is irresistible. Would that all professing Christians practised this lesson,

then would the time soon come when "the earth would be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

"Even as I received of my Father." As Christ received of the Father to bring the nations into subjection under him by his sceptre, or the power of the Gospel (Psalms ii. 9), so he makes true Christians share in this work of subduing the nations, by their holy example and consistent lives.

VERSE 28.—*And I will give him the morning star.*

This is to be interpreted in keeping with verse 17. Having promised to him that overcometh the hidden manna, and the white stone, and the new name, Christ here promises him the "morning star." This is himself. He is styled thus (chap. xxii. 16). Getting himself, is the *summum bonum* of happiness, or the chief good of the believer's prospect. As the morning star ushers in the day, and is a pledge of joy after the darkness of the night, so the Lord Jesus Christ is the pledge of joy and perpetual day to the believer, after the darkness of the night of weeping which he often experienced.

VERSE 29.—*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*

(See for explanation Chap. II. 7.)

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER II.

1. What is meant by doing "the first works"?—To examine the cause of our sin, to repent of it, and bring it to the blood of the atonement, to have it washed away.
2. Who were the Nicolaitenes?—A sect who, while professing Christianity, indulged in sin, and gratified the appetites of the flesh.
3. What is meant by "the tree of life"?—The paradise of heaven, or the enjoyment of Christ's presence, who is in reality the tree of life, as producing all spiritual blessings.
4. What are we to understand by "the devil casting some of you into prison"?—The prison of persecution, which some of them would be exposed to in the ten Pagan persecutions. Satan, by his influence, would urge wicked men to cast them in.

5. What is the meaning of their being "in tribulation ten days"?—Referring to the ten Pagan persecutions the Christians suffered.

6. What is meant by "the second death"?—The torments of hell, which they would not suffer who got the victory through the blood of the Lamb.

7. What is meant by "the hidden manna"?—That as the children of Israel were fed with visible manna, so the enjoyment of Christ's presence in heaven would be their spiritual food, and satisfy all their wants.

8. What are we to understand by the "white stone"?—It refers probably to the custom of trying prisoners among the ancients. Like our jury, those who were for condemning the prisoner cast into an urn a black stone; those for acquitting him, a white stone. So here the "white stone" is the token of approval.

9. What is meant by the "new name written" in the stone?—The reference is most likely to the custom that obtained at the Grecian games, of writing the name of the victor on the prize he obtained. So here the name of the pardoned one is written on the stone, as a visible mark of his approval.

10. Why is it that it is a "new name" that is written?—Because it is the name of his adoption into God's family. He is now a son instead of an alien.

11. What is the meaning of "No man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it"?—The seed of Divine grace is so hidden in the heart that it is not visible to outsiders, except so far as it is seen in the fruit of the Spirit.

12. How are Thyatira's "last works more than the first"?—Instead of receding from her first love, like Ephesus, she had increased in love.

13. Who is meant by "you," in v. 34?—The minister, or messenger, of the church of Thyatira, whom John was addressing.

14. Who are meant by "the rest"?—Those who kept free from false doctrine and false practices.

15. What is meant by the expression, "till I come"?—When he comes to call us to judgment.

16. What are we to understand by the expression, "I will give power" to him over the nations?—That he would influence the nations for good by a holy example.

17. How does he "rule them with a rod of iron"?—His influence is as effectual to subdue them as a rod of iron to break the potter's vessel.

18. What is meant by "the morning star"?—Christ himself (chap. xxii. 16). As the morning star is the sign of joy, ushering in the day, so Christ is the pledge of joy to the believer, to whom he has promised to give himself.

CHAPTER III.

THIS chapter continues the account of the address to the seven churches, through their angels, or messengers.

VERSE I.—*And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write: These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.*

Here is a church waning in religion, and her character is that she has a name to live, while she is in reality dead. This is a sad state of things, and it is true of all mere professors of religion, who have a name of Christianity without the reality. And this should teach all who profess to be Christians to examine themselves whether they are in the faith, lest such a sentence should be pronounced upon them. The remedy for this state of things is the quickening of the Holy Spirit.

"The seven Spirits" is a title of perfection for the Holy Spirit, who looks on and sees the defect—for "the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God"—and Christ, having the Spirit in perfection, says, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." The church here needs that Holy Spirit to quicken her from a death of sin to a life of righteousness. It is he only who can quicken our languid graces and give us more than the form of godliness—the real power of it.

Sardis was a celebrated city of Lydia, in Asia Minor. It lay about 67 miles east of Ephesus, on the great caravan road to Persia. It is supposed to have been founded shortly after the destruction of Troy, upwards of 900 years before the Christian era. It became the capital of Lydia, and a flourishing and prosperous city; but in the reign of Tiberius, about A.D. 17, it was destroyed by an earthquake. By this emperor's munificence it was raised from its ruins, and at an early period of Christianity it embraced the Gospel, and a Christian church

was planted in it. But Christianity had so declined in it now, at the close of the first century, that it had only a name to live, while it was dead. What a warning to churches and individuals to keep the spark of grace in them constantly fanned by the Holy Spirit, for without his presence it will decline like that of the church at Sardis.

VERSE 2.—*Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die : for I have not found thy works perfect before God.*

Blessed be God that there is a remnant of life in it, and hence the exhortation to be "watchful and strengthen the things which remain." What need, at all times, we have for that watchfulness, and to pray the prayer, Lord, "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." This is doubly necessary when deadness or backsliding sets in. It is said that declension of religion generally sets in in the closet ; and if so, by all means let the closet again be the place where it will be counteracted. There a revival begins generally in the soul, and there it is carried on in the soul.

But the church is to "strengthen the things that are ready to die." How this? As tonics and strengthening food are to be prescribed for a weakened constitution, so, relying more firmly on Christ's person and work for salvation, and pleading more earnestly for the Holy Spirit, are the prescriptions for strengthening our grace and purging away the disorders that are weakening our spiritual constitution. Then the spiritual malady will be cured, and we will run in the way of God's commandments.

"I have not found thy works perfect before God." The solution of this phrase may be found, we think, in Col. i. 27, 28, where Paul is speaking of presenting "every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Sardis wanted the faith which can only do this, by having Christ in us the hope of glory. And, though her works might pass current before men, yet without this faith neither she nor we can appear approved before God. Her faith being languid, her holiness would be languid also, for the latter can rise only in proportion to the former, as the barometer with

the atmosphere; and consequently her works, which are the outcome of both, were defective in the eyes of a holy God. She had so far degenerated that she had almost become conformed to the world, and bore no testimony, by her holy life and example, against the evils of the world around her.

There is a lesson here which churches and individuals should study. If they are living in conformity to the world, and are bearing no testimony by their lives and works against its evils, then they are evidently in a state of declension, and, like Sardis, "ready to die"; and Christ pronounces over them the impeachment, "I have not found thy works perfect before God." The only remedy for this state of things is, "be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain."

VERSE 3.—*Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard; and hold fast, and repent. If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come up on thee*

The writer, by the Spirit of God, says to this church at Sardis, in effect, think of the way you have received the truth, "in fear, and in much trembling." If we were as careful of keeping a thing and taking care of it, as we are sometimes in getting it, we would not part with it easily. The truth had come to them at a great sacrifice—at the risk, and sometimes at the expense, of the apostles' and martyrs' lives—and they should hold it carefully. Having bought it so dearly, they should sell it not. The text says, "hold fast and repent." Keep what you have got, and mourn that you have let it so far go that it is almost ready to die.

"If, therefore, thou wilt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief." Here is the warning set over against the exhortation; and blessed be God that he sounds the warning to dying churches and drooping Christians against the disease that had set in, to counteract it. Let backsliders and "ready-to-halt" Christians look to the Rock whence they are hewn, in the time of their declension, for steadying them on it. If they will not do so, he "will come on them as a thief," suddenly and un-

expectedly, to punish them for their formality, and, perhaps, to leave them even less grace and less spiritual life than they had before.

VERSE 4.—*Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments ; and they shall walk with me in white ; for they are worthy.*

Though spiritual life in this city had become so languid, still there were a few who had not yet defiled their garments. So in Israel of old (1 Kings xix. 18), when Elijah thought that he was the only exception to the universal defection that had set in in the nation, God says, " Yet have I left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal." This teaches us that God has his children—his hidden ones—where the world would never think of looking for them, and even where good men would not look for them. Blessed be God that there shall still be a seed to serve him while sun and moon endure.

The promise to these few is that "they shall walk with me, for they are worthy." They shall walk with the Lamb on the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, clothed in the white robes of his righteousness, laid hold on by faith (Rom. iii. 22); and their worthiness is not in themselves, but in him who died for them and rose again. They shall be glorious in heaven through his glory reflected on them; and they are worthy on the ground of his obedience and satisfaction in their room and stead.

VERSE 5.—*He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment ; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.*

We have had this expression, "he that overcometh," in Chap. II. 26 (see for explanation on that clause). The promise to him here is that he "shall be clothed in white raiment," that is, with the white robe of a Saviour's righteousness, which is "unto all and upon all them that believe." "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John v. 4.)

"And I will not blot out his name out of the book of life." Are we to infer from this that any names are to

be blotted out of "the book of life"? We think not, for there are no erasures in heaven. What, then, is the meaning of the expression? Christ is evidently here speaking after the manner of men, and it must be understood by a custom that prevailed in some ancient cities of registering all the citizens, and blotting out the names of those who died. Jesus says, "He that overcometh shall be clothed in white raiment." Unlike many of the Sardinians, whose names were to be blotted out as dead, or giving no signs of spiritual life, "he that overcometh" has his name retained on the register. Whom God loves he loves to the end. This is another lesson: to examine ourselves that we have not merely a name to live, but to see that our names may not be blotted out, like the dead citizens, from the register of heaven.

"I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Here is a second promise which Christ makes to the man who overcomes. It is equivalent to what he said in Matt. x. 32, that if we confess him before men he will confess us before his Father who is in heaven.

VERSE 6.—*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*

(See on Chap. II. 7.)

VERSE 7.—*And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth.*

Philadelphia, like Sardis, was also a city of Lydia, in Asia Minor, about 30 miles south-east of Sardis. It is supposed to have derived its name from Attalus Philadelphus, who either founded it or enlarged it. It remained for some 800 years a Christian and a flourishing city; and, though the superstition and error which overspread the Christian world did affect it more or less, yet it may be said, notwithstanding, to have had "a little strength," and to have "kept the word of his patience." It is said of it that, when every other city in Asia Minor had yielded to Turkish power, it alone held out against the conqueror.

But at length it had to succumb to superior power, and fell into the hands of the Turks in the 14th century. Even at the present it has in it about 2,000 professing Christians, chiefly Greeks, with an archbishop, and five places of public worship. Here is a little revival; here is a contrast with what we saw in "dead" Sardis. It is refreshing, after the gloom of winter, to see the bloom of spring; and after we have been travelling past a "valley of dry bones," to see life coming into them again. The Lord Jesus gives first a description of himself as "holy" and "true," as having the "key of David, opening, and no man shutting."

"The key of David" means that Christ, as the descendant of David, uses the spiritual key as David did the temporal. David having come to the throne, and having subdued all his enemies, wielded the key of power in his kingdom, letting in and out whom he pleased. So the Lord Jesus, as the King of Zion, has the key of heaven, and no man can stand between him and his right to open and shut as he pleases. And when any church would invest Peter, or any other functionary, with what belongs to Christ alone, he exclaims, "My glory will not I give to another." While Peter was the first to open the door of faith to the Gentiles (Acts x.), and while the other apostles got the same power of the keys (Matt. xviii. 18), to exercise discipline, and while ministers and church officers are more or less invested with the same power of discipline, to exclude the unholy and profane from the sealing ordinances of the Gospel, yet Christ alone retains the key of heaven. And it may be found, in the end, that some whom all these functionaries would keep out, Christ lets in, and some whom they would let in, Christ keeps out.

VERSE 8.—*I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.*

We have here Christ's omniscience: "I know thy works"—and his omnipotence: "I have set before thee an open door." He alone sees the heart, and has power to open the door to enter into life. When that door is once opened, "no man can shut it." He has opened the

door by his obedience unto death, and this satisfies God's justice. The door of access is open to all who are willing to enter in. He "appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." The barrier that kept the door closed was sin, and this being put away, "there is access into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus."

"For thou hast a little strength." This shows us how tenderly Christ deals with the feeble converts who have followed him at too great a distance. He "will not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed." Be the spark of divine grace ever so small, he will cherish it till it bursts into a flame; and wherever there is strength, let it be ever so little, like this church at Philadelphia, it will be matured till the sapling, strong in Christ, puts forth the branches of the oak, that resists the storm and the hurricane.

"And hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." The secret of the "little strength" lies in the seed of the Word which she had cherished in her bosom. There is a reason for everything, and if a church or individual would be strong, it must be owing to the Word abiding in them. No wonder that Peter says (1 Peter ii. 2), "Desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby." The beginning of spiritual life is owing to the seed of the Word planted by the Spirit of God, and the development and strength of it arise from the same cause. No wonder that Peter says again (2 Peter iii. 18), "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Now the knowledge of Christ is only got from the Scriptures, and if we are to grow in grace we must search the Scriptures. There are some who would divorce the growth in grace from the searching of the Scriptures. This can never be done, for the one is the complement of the other; and if we are to grow in the one, we must make ourselves acquainted with the other. And those who would tell us to grow in grace, while allowing the Bible to lie on the shelf from the one Sabbath day to the other, only remember the half of Christ's message.

"And hast not denied my name." It is not enough to have faith in the heart, without the confession of Christ on

the lips (Rom. x. 9); and here this church has the double grace. The "little strength" is from union to him by faith, nourished by the seed of the Word; and the confessing him before men is a pledge that he will confess her before his Father who is in heaven.

VERSE 9.—*Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.*

The question arises here—What is meant by the synagogue of Satan? It probably means the apostate Jews who rejected the Lord of glory, notwithstanding his miracles in proof of his claim of Messiahship, and forfeited their right to be regarded as a church. With these may be classed other apostates from the truth, as the Gnostics, who held the eternity of matter, and that it is essentially evil; the Docetae, who taught that Christ had only a shadowy body; the Sabellians, who held that he did not suffer at all, but only the Father under the name of the Son. By whatever name all these might call themselves—whether Jews or Gentiles—Jesus Christ says, "I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not."

And he promises still further to the church at Philadelphia, that however proud and lofty and vain these apostates were, he would make them come and worship before her feet. This teaches us that however vain and pretentious any system or church may be, it must come, in the end, to bow at the shrine of Christianity, or the true Christian Church, and acknowledge its authority, and that it is the only church that Christ loves, as taking his name and bearing his image. And yielding homage to Christ with the true church is a sign that false systems become conformed to the church they had despised, and revere the name they had so long reviled.

VERSE 10.—*Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*

"The word of his patience" means holding fast that word which teaches patience, amid so much defection and false doctrine. And as they did this, he promises to keep them "from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world" for its trial. This doubtless refers to the ten Pagan persecutions, some of which had already taken place, but others were to follow. God often provided an asylum for his people in those trying times, as the Catacombs or subterranean caverns under the city of Rome, from which the materials for building the city were largely taken; the mountains of the Alps, where many fled who afterwards were included among the Waldenses. These persecutions tried the people who "dwelt upon the earth." But protection is guaranteed here to this church for her faithfulness to Christ, and preserving the word when it might have been wrested from them by so many adversaries.

VERSE II.—*Behold, I come quickly : hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*

This appears to refer to the speedy overthrow of the remnant of Judaism that may have still remained after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans, in the year A.D. 70, and of the overthrow of Paganism that was to follow the preaching of the Gospel accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit. By this time the seeds of the Gospel had largely been scattered through the Roman Empire by the representatives of the various nationalities who appeared at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. These, having got the baptism of the Holy Spirit and of fire, became missionaries; and then, after the persecution of Stephen (Acts viii. 4), "they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." Paul before this had preached at Rome, the capital of the Empire, and from it, as a centre, must have sounded out the glad tidings to the remotest corner of the land. This was about A.D. 60; and John's vision, in which Christ says, "Behold, I come quickly," was perhaps about 40 years after this, when the seeds of the Gospel had taken root, as a power, to the overthrow of idolatry and the setting

up of Christ's kingdom on a larger scale than before. Then Jesus Christ says, in the vision, "I come quickly."

This is the historical view of the passage, while the application of it is, that Christ says to every one, I have set before you a work—I have assigned you a task—"Go work to-day in my vineyard," and "Behold I come quickly, to give every man according as his work shall be." (chap. xxii. 12.) It is a warning to every man to watch, not knowing what hour his Lord shall come to call him to give an account for the deeds done in his body.

"Hold that fast . . . that no man take thy crown." Whatever measure of faith you have received,—whatever of the Word you have received in your hands and laid up in your hearts,—hold fast against all the efforts of your adversaries to wrest it from you. Barter not the crown which is in reserve for you—a crown of glory which fadeth not away—for all the world besides. The crown is bound up in the covenant, and the cross is bound up there too. For getting the one you must take up the other. Notwithstanding this, "Let no man take thy crown."

VERSE 12.—*Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out . . . and I will write upon him my new name.*

This verse is intimately connected with the preceding, and its meaning is much the same. The man that overcometh, or holds fast his integrity in the midst of trial and persecution, which may be often brought upon him to induce him to relinquish his integrity, will be "a pillar in the temple of God." This gives him a prominent place in it, and shows that his work in union with Christ is not forgotten. Christ's work is reckoned to him and rewarded in him. Pillars have been erected to commemorate men, or events, as Absalom's pillar (2 Sam. xviii. 18), Jacob's pillar at Bethel (Gen. xxiii. 18), Pompey's pillar in Egypt, to commemorate him as a warrior. So here Christ says, "I will make him that overcometh a pillar in the temple of my God," in token, or commemoration, of his success through the blood of the Lamb.

"And he shall go no more out," that is, he will not be

cast out like the apostate angels, but will have a place there for ever.

"And I will write upon him the name of my God," that is, those having overcome now stand in a new relationship to God their Father, in the capacity of sons and daughters, having his name named upon them.

"And the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem." They had not only their Father's name upon them, as an evidence of their relationship, but they had that of the "New Jerusalem," with its strong bars and gates, as a city of protection, that the enemy could not follow them there, and they would go no more out. The idea seems to be taken from the census of a city, as when one is registered as a citizen, he claims that, as such, he should enjoy protection. So, as sons and citizens, we are entitled to double protection. This explains more clearly the phrase, "they shall go no more out." God shuts them in and the enemy out, and gives them, as the names on them indicate, the privilege of sons and daughters, and perfect protection.

The meaning of the "New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God" is somewhat difficult of explanation. We have the same form of expression in chap. xxi. 2, and whatever is the meaning of the one must be the meaning of the other. We have seen already that those who "overcome" are registered as citizens of the "New Jerusalem." Now, the "New Jerusalem" is a type of the Church triumphant in heaven, of which it is said here that it "cometh down out of heaven from God." The meaning seems to be that the type of the New Jerusalem, or heaven, comes down now into the Christian Church in holy ordinances, holy fellowship, holy citizens, holy character. in a word, as the likeness of the sky is mirrored in a clear lake, so the likeness of the New Jerusalem is mirrored in the Church here below.

"And I will write upon him my new name." The new name of Jesus was the Christ, or the Anointed One; and he anoints his sons, or accepted ones, with his own name (Ps. cv. 15), and this new name of Christ, or the anointed, upon them, sets them apart as the citizens of his own kingdom, and seals their security.

VERSE 13.—*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*

(See explanation on verse 6.)

VERSE 14.—*And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write : These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God.*

Laodicea was a city of Phrygia, in Asia Minor, and for some time the capital of that place. It was built on the river Lycus, and lay about 112 miles east of Ephesus, and 15 south-west of Colosse. It was first called the city of Jupiter, but was rebuilt by Antiochus, the Syro-Grecian king, who called it by this name after his wife, Laodice. It early embraced the Gospel, and a Christian church was planted in it in the apostolic age, and is the last of those seven churches to whom John wrote his epistle.

“The Amen, the faithful and true witness,” is the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom the prophecies and the types are all confirmed, and in whom all have their fulfilment, for “all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.” (2 Cor. i. 20.) He is the faithful and true witness (see exposition Chap. I. 5), and whatever he says will come to pass, and will be confirmed in him as the “Amen.”

“The beginning of the creation of God.” Is the meaning here, as Socinians say, that Christ is the beginning of God’s creation, or that he is the Author of God’s creation? In a word—is he the subject of God’s creation, or the Author of it? We believe the latter is the meaning. He is “the beginning of the creation of God,” as calling forth into existence all created things. (John i. 3.)

VERSE 15.—*I know thy works, that thou art neither cold or hot ; I would thou wert cold or hot.*

“I know thy works.” Christ knows all things. Here is Omniscience ascribed to him, as in the last verse Omnipotence. He searches the heart and tries the reins of the children of men. This lukewarm state between cold

and hot Jesus Christ abhors, and says, "I would thou wert cold or hot." But the translation of the phrase is rather unhappy, and makes Christ to pray for such a state of things, which is contrary to his mission, and contrary to his will. (John xvii 24.) "It was becoming that you be cold or hot," meaning that there is no neutral state, and that there is less likelihood of a person in a lukewarm state, who does not feel his danger, coming to Christ than the awakened sinner.

VERSE 16.—*So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*

This is a most unsafe state to be in, and the doom pronounced on the person is, that Christ will "spue him out of his mouth." How many are satisfied with this state of things! Let such beware, for as the sea spews out mire and dirt, as unworthy to be retained among its pure saline particles, so Christ will cast such from him, as unworthy of his presence.

VERSES 17, 18.—*Because thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.*

These are the characteristics of a proud church, forgetful that these outward forms are no part of the real man; for under this outward garb of riches and wordly "goods" may lurk the grossest spiritual degradation, as the latter clause of the verse shows. There may not be a particle of real religion or morality under this outward cloak. It is a poor thing to have a shining casket with no jewels. But Christ says, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in fire, that thou mayest be rich." This refers to the riches treasured up in the Lord Jesus, which are as pure as the gold purged of all its dross by the fire. This secured by faith is the real riches, which make a man of the most abject poverty as rich as Cræsus.

The "white raiment" means Christ's righteousness, which is "unto all, and upon all them that believe." (Rom. iii. 22.) This covers "the shame of our nakedness," which is our pollution and defilement, and enables the church to appear at last without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. (Ephes. v. 27.)

The "eye-salve" is the enlightening of the mental vision by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, by which our spiritual blindness is taken away, and we see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. iv. 6.)

VERSE 19.—*As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten : be zealous therefore, and repent.*

Afflictions are, then, not the sign of God's anger, but of his love to his own people. They are sent as chastisements to them to humble them, to purge them of their dross, and to make them liker himself, and, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, to fit them for heaven. The question arises then—Why does God afflict his people when the punishment due to their sin is taken away in justification? (Rom. viii. 1.) Their affliction is not of the nature of punishment, but of chastisement for their good; and as they will not come into condemnation hereafter, he manifests his disapproval of their sin by their chastisement here. Nathan said to David, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die." But though the penal consequences of the sin were taken away, yet, because his sin had given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, his child died, and from that day forth he was afflicted in his person (Psalms lxxiii. 14), and in his family, testifying to God's disapproval of his fault. Witness the case of Amnon's death and Absalom's revolt, &c. (2 Sam. xiii. 15.) The fact is, from the day of his great sin, of his double sin—murder and adultery—the sword never departed from his house till the day of his death, verifying Nathan's prediction, "The sword shall never depart from thine house." (2 Sam. xii. 10.)

These chastisements on God's people are not to be laid on, as some teach, in the shape of penance. That is taking the prerogative out of God's hand and putting it into the hand of another. They are laid on by God himself, "whom I love, I rebuke and chasten."

"Be zealous therefore and repent." Zeal for the truth is commendable, but there cannot be zeal while there is indifference or lukewarmness in spiritual matters. Throw aside, says Christ, mere formality, and let love for your own souls, and love for the souls of others inflame your lives, that all may see it, and take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus, and that the Spirit of God has kindled the spark of Divine grace in your souls. And as a further evidence of this, repent of your coldness and formality and your sin of indifference, and "do works meet for repentance," or as the evidence of it.

How applicable is this exhortation to many churches, yea, to almost all churches, at the present day. They are, for the most part, satisfied with a form of rounds of duty, without this spirit of holy enthusiasm being kindled within, and hence they allow Christ's cause to suffer by this passiveness. Others are looking on, and because they see their neighbours falling into this languid state, settle down also into indifference and formality. Then the world, when it sees professing Christians and professing churches so like itself, takes courage to itself that, after all, there is little if any difference between the church and the world, and goes on more determinedly in its wickedness than before. Let this arouse sleepy Christians and sleepy churches to cry mightily for the power of the Holy Spirit to kindle them into a flame of love and enthusiasm in the cause of Christ and true religion; and let them mourn over their past indifference and past sin, and bring forth the evidence of renewed zeal.

VERSE 20.—*Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

This shows Christ's condescension, in standing at the door of our hearts and waiting for admittance. It shows

also the great interest he takes in our soul's welfare, in that he has come so far to get a lodgement in these cold hearts of ours. And we see here the beautiful connexion of this with the preceding passage. Then we were cold, but the object of Christ's coming into our hearts is to warm them, and fill them with a flame of his heavenly love. Will we not open to this heavenly stranger who has knocked so long, and say to these cold hearts of ours, "Rise and let him in"?

"If any man hear my voice, and open the door will sup and he with me." Jesus Christ knocks by his Word read and preached: he knocks by his providence; he knocks by sickness and the death of friends; and is waiting to see who will answer his knock and give a response to his call. He that hears and opens the door, has the promise, "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." The fellowship becomes mutual, and there is an interchange of kindness. What condescension on the part of Christ, the heavenly guest! And, notwithstanding, how many there are who, while Christ has been knocking at their hearts from youth till now, have not yet opened to the friendly call. Men would not act thus in a worldly point of view. If but a stranger come to your door on a cold wintry night, and knock long for admission, it is a hard heart that will not rise and let him in; and yet, alas! many treat the heavenly stranger worse than this wayfarer. No wonder if he should turn at last from such hearts in indifference, and say, "I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." (Prov. i. 25, 26.)

VERSE 21.—*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*

We have had the expression, "to him that overcometh," several times in the case of the other churches, and here the victor, overcoming through faith, has the promise that he is to sit with Christ on his throne. The meaning appears to be that Christ will exalt him to the same platform with himself in his heavenly kingdom. Surely a

great honour to be conferred on one who was once a sinful creature, and only a fit subject for the kingdom of darkness.

All Christ's children are "kings and priests unto God" (Chap. I. 6), and such, by position and holiness, are only fit to reign with him. Again, they are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, and as fathers take their sons to be partners with themselves when they become of age, so here these are taken to be sharers in the Father's and in the Son's glory. They get this position and privilege as a matter of grace, or free favour, for Jesus says, "I will grant to him that overcometh." &c. Christ got this seat as a matter of right, having obeyed his Father's will and done always the things that pleased him; we get it as a matter of grace, "being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. iii. 24.)

VERSE 22.—*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*

(See explanation of this verse where it occurs first, in Chap. II. 29).

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER III.

1. Who is this that had "the seven Spirits"?—Christ having the Holy Spirit in perfection. (See answer to Question 4, on first chap.)
2. What are the things that are ready to die?—The graces that were languid.
3. How are they to be strengthened?—By relying more firmly on Christ's person and atonement, and pleading more earnestly for the quickening of the Holy Spirit.
4. Wherein did the defect lie?—The church at Sardis wanted strength of faith, which rendered her works imperfect, as the one rises with the other.
5. How are we to understand the expression, "which had not defiled their garments"?—They had not yielded to the defection of religion that had set so largely in.
6. How clothed?—In the "white" robes of a Saviour's righteousness.

7. How are they worthy?—On the ground of Christ's obedience and satisfaction in their room and stead.

8. What is meant by being "clothed in white raiment"?—(See answer to Question 6, preceding).

9. What is meant by the phrase, "I will not blot out his name out of the book of life"?—The reference is to the custom that prevailed in some ancient cities of registering all the citizens, and blotting out the names of those who had died; but we are not to infer that there are any erasures in heaven.

10. What is meant by "the key of David"?—That Christ, as the descendant of David, holds the spiritual key of heaven, as David did the temporal key of power over his subjects.

11. What is meant by "the synagogue of Satan"?—The apostate Jews, who rejected the Lord of glory notwithstanding the many evidences of his divine mission; and some other false sects.

12. What is meant by "worshipping before her feet"?—Bowling down to worship Christ in union with her.

13. What are we to understand by "keeping the word of his patience"?—Holding the word, which teaches patience, amid so much defection and false doctrine.

14. What is meant by "the hour of temptation"?—Doubtless the ten Pagan persecutions.

15. What is meant by being "a pillar in the temple of God"—A prominent place in heaven to him that "overcometh."

16. How "go no more out"?—He shall not be cast out of heaven as the rebel angels.

17. What is the meaning of the expression, "I will write upon him the name of my God"?—It means that he is taken into a new relationship to God, as a son.

18. What is the meaning of writing upon him "the name of the city of my God"?—That he would have a place in the New Jerusalem for safety, as a citizen.

19. How does the New Jerusalem "come down out of heaven"?—In holy ordinances, holy fellowship, and holy citizenship.

20. What is meant by "writing upon him my new name"?—The new name of Jesus was Christ, the anointed one, and he writes the latter name upon his people, to designate their holiness,

21. What is the meaning of calling the Lord Jesus Christ "the beginning of the creation of God"?—Not as the first Being who was made, but as the active Being himself, calling the creation into existence, as the Author of it. (John i. 3.)

22. What is the doctrine underlying the expression, "cold or hot"?—That there is no middle state of neutrality between the broad way and the narrow way.

23. What state is every man then in?—In a state of nature, or a state of grace.

24. Is the lukewarm state safe?—No; Christ says to the man in it, "I will spue thee out of my mouth."

25. What is meant by the "gold tried in the fire"?—The riches treasured up in Christ.

26. What is meant by the "white raiment"?—The white robe of a Saviour's righteousness, which covers the sinner's "nakedness."

27. What is meant by the "eye-salve"?—The enlightening of the mind by the Holy Spirit.

28. What is the nature of the afflictions God sends on his own people?—Not punishments, as criminals, but chastisements for their good as sons.

29. How does Christ "knock" at the door of our hearts?—By warnings and providences, but especially by his Word read and preached.

30. What is the meaning of the expression, "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me"?—The mutual fellowship that exists between Christ and his people.

31. How does the victor "that overcometh" sit down with Christ in his throne?—Christ will exalt him to the same platform with himself, as a son and an heir.

CHAPTER IV.

THIS chapter opens with an account of John's second vision, or it may be a continuation of the first, rising next in order before his view. There is a nice order followed out in the vision. The first sight exhibited to John's view was a description of the Lord Jesus Christ; the second is a description of the great God; and, in connexion with his glory, we have his surroundings and worship, and the praise ascribed to him. As the communication respecting the seven churches opened with a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ as King and Head of the Church, so the communication respecting the seals and trumpets opens with a vision of Jehovah as the great God, the maker of heaven and earth.

VERSE 1.—*After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.*

“After this,” or “after these things,” as it is plural in the Greek, “I looked,” meaning after what was recorded in Chap. I. 19. John notices the vision farther. Having written down, according to direction, the first part of what was revealed to him, he proceeds to enumerate the second. The opening of the door would seem to imply the removal of every obstacle to John's full view of what was passing within. It would enable him to see, and also to hear the trumpet summoning his attention. The expression, “Come up hither,” intimates the welcome accorded to him, and the friendship with which he was received to see the future of the vision.

VERSES 2, 3.—*And immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to*

look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone : and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

We have, in these verses, the glory of Jehovah. 1. He is seated on "a throne." This represents his kingly power, ruling and reigning as lord of the universe. 2. He is "like a jasper and a sardine stone." There is no human likeness here introduced, teaching us that the Godhead is not to be worshipped in the likeness of a man. But these colours convey an idea of his brightness and glory. The "jasper" is a transparent stone, which gives a variety of colours, and the "sardine stone" is red, perhaps representing his justice and anger against sinners. They both may convey to us the variety of attributes in which he appeared to Moses (Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7), "merciful and gracious," &c.; also his justice, "that will by no means clear the guilty." 3. He is surrounded by a "rainbow." As all the colours shine out in the rainbow, so all glory shines out in the person of Jehovah. As the rainbow betokened the covenant of safety to Noah, that the earth was no more to be destroyed by a flood, so the rainbow round about Jehovah is an emblem of the covenant of peace and security to all that are in Christ Jesus, or united to him by faith. The prophet Isaiah (chap. liv. 9, 10), compares the two, and shows that the security of the latter is as great as that of the former. It is so secure that he says it shall never be dissolved.

This "rainbow" was "in sight like unto an emerald." The "emerald" is always green, and symbolizes God's glory, as never fading, and those that are his will ever be secure.

VERSE 4.—*And round about the throne were four and twenty seats : and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment ; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.*

1. The number of the elders. This corresponds to the twenty-four courses of the priests in 1 Chron. xxiv. 1—19, compared with Luke i. 8. They held a conspicuous place among church members, as ruling elders or presbyters, ruling and teaching also, if they had the latter gift. They

are the ruling elders in our churches, and represent the priests under the Old Law, as the rulers and guides of the people. This is the opinion of the late Dr. Glasgow in his commentary on this passage.

2. Their honour. They are on the same throne with God; they are "sitting round about the throne." This shows their nearness to Jehovah. They are admitted to surround his throne and behold his glory. Their position verifies the statement of Chap. III. 21, that they are privileged to sit with Christ on his throne.

3. Their dress. They are "clothed in white raiment." This denotes their purity; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. By nature they were impure, but Jesus Christ has become "the Lord their righteousness (Jer. xxiii. 6); and by his unspotted righteousness reckoned unto them, or regarded as theirs, they thus sit so near Jehovah and adore him.

4. Their dignity. They are kings; "they had on their heads crowns of gold." This shows that they reign with Christ in his glory.

5. They are pure. Washed in the blood of Jesus, and sanctified by his Spirit, they are pure like gold.

VERSE 5.—*And out of the throne proceeded lightnings . . . and there were seven lamps . . . which are the seven Spirits of God.*

This part of the vision describes what John heard, for the door was "opened" (verse 1), not only to let him hear, but see. These sights and sounds would seem to indicate the solemn grandeur of heaven, and what inspires with awe any approach to an interview with Jehovah. When Moses went up to the mount to meet with God, it burned with fire, and there were thunderings and lightnings, and a black cloud upon it, "and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud." (Exodus xix. 16-18.) And here there is something of the same awful grandeur: John sees also "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne," which we are told "are the seven Spirits of God." (See explanation of this on Chap. I. 4.)

VERSES 6-8.—*And before the throne there was a sea of glass . . . in the midst of the throne . . . four beasts. . . . And the rest not . . . saying, Holy . . . is to come.*

The “sea of glass” here “before the throne” intimates, we think, the purity, or purifying process all must pass through who are admitted to God’s presence. As at the temple, there was a laver of brass for the priests to wash in before they went in to minister before the Lord; so here, all who shall stand in his presence in glory must be washed in the blood of Jesus and sanctified by his Spirit. The crystal represents the purity of the sea, and is a fit emblem of the purity of the saints in coming up from the fountain of a Saviour’s blood, and the purifying process of the sanctification of the Spirit.

“And round about the throne were four beasts.” The first question that arises here is—Who are these “beasts,” or literally, “living creatures”? We think they represent the four cherubim of Ezekiel’s vision (chaps. i. x.), and are the emblems of redeemed men. It is plain they have their type there. We consider the cherubim are the emblem of redeemed men: 1. from their position at Eden; pointing out to Adam that, though justice cast him out of the garden for eating the forbidden fruit, yet through the promise of a Saviour made to him (Gen. iii. 15), he might enter into a better Eden than that from which he was ejected. Justice in the flaming sword barred him out, not to enter again; but mercy, in the cherubim, indicates to him that through faith in that promised Saviour, God will give him yet a better Eden. The promise made to him *before* he was ejected keeps him from sinking under the sentence; and the cherubim keep before his mind, as we think, the emblem of redeemed men. 2. From their position in the tabernacle. They are standing on the lid of the ark, or the mercy-seat—typifying Christ’s propitiatory, and where the high priest, on the great day of atonement, sprinkled the blood seven times—and of a *piece* with it. (Exod. xxv. 19.) The cherubim not only stand on the mercy-seat, but they are of a piece with it, showing that Christ and his people are legally one, as the bailman with the debtor. If they are not the emblem of redeemed men,

why are they of a piece with the mercy-seat? 3. The four beasts, which have their type in the cherubim, sing the song of redeeming love (chap. v. 8, 9), which would indicate that the cherubim are the emblem of redeemed men.

We think that, as the New Law excels the Old, the beasts represent a higher class of functionaries than the priests under the Old Law, and point particularly to the true ministers of the Gospel, as watching for souls and active in their Master's service, like the living creatures in Ezekiel's vision. All the redeemed souls act thus, but the business of the ministers is specially to do so, as they are set as watchmen on Zion's walls.

1. We have the position of the beasts. It is "in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne." As typical of true ministers, they lived near to God here, in prayer and praise, and meditation and self-examination; and they are near to him there, living under his shadow and in his very presence. They are not raised to that position by any merit of their own—as what they did was but their duty to do—but through the merits of their once crucified but now exalted Redeemer; and no wonder they can sing the song of redeeming love with the elders (chap. v. 9): "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Christ deserves the merit for all we are or ever expect to be.

2. Their number. "Four," to point them out as inviting sinners from the four quarters of the earth. As in the twenty-first chapter of this Book the wall of the New Jerusalem is described as having gates on the "east," on the "north," on the "south," and on the "west," to admit the heavenly inhabitants; we think the number "four" here means that God's redeemed people are in heaven from all quarters—"Jew and Gentile, Barbarian and Scythian, are all one in Christ Jesus."

3. Their intelligence. They watch for souls. They are "full of eyes before and behind," denoting their intelligence. They were men who watched for souls, were all missionaries in their day and generation, and were intelligent Christians in Divine things as well as zealous and godly Christians.

4. Their likeness. They are "like a lion" for boldness, "like a calf," or ox, for strength, "like a man," for wisdom, and "like a flying eagle," for swiftness. They were bold in their Master's cause; strong in his cause; wise to advance his cause; and swift in his mission.

Further, they "had each of them six wings about him." They had been already likened to the eagle for swiftness, but the number of their wings would not indicate addition to their flight; but, as Isaiah says of the seraphim (vi. 2), "two to cover their face, two to cover their feet, and two to fly." Two of the wings are to cover their face, in reverence before God; two to cover their feet, in humility; and two to fly, as active in his cause.

"And they were full of eyes within." It was said already that they were "full of eyes before and behind," here, it is said, "they were full of eyes within." While in the former case they watched for souls and looked for the souls of others, this we apprehend means that they looked well to their own souls, looked often within, and held communion with God. They kept their own vineyard as well as that of others, and it could not be said of them, "They made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept." (Canticles i. 6.)

5. Their employment. "They rest not day and night, saying Holy come." They are never tired doing God's will and doing his work, and never should be tired. To this they are set apart as watchmen on Zion's walls, and to this they should consecrate their whole energies of body and spirit; and though the flesh be often "weak," the spirit should be "willing." They must be saying by their lives also, reflecting the character of their great Master, that he is "holy," and the same spirit which was in him must be in them. Christ is called "Lord God Almighty," as having all power in heaven and in earth, who became incarnate, who obeyed and suffered for us, who rose and pleads for us, and who shall come to judge the world at the last day.

We learn from the foregoing verses—1. The doctrine of God's sovereignty, that "his kingdom ruleth over all." 2. The doctrine of the security of his people, typified by the rainbow round about the throne. 3. The doctrine of

his mediatorial kingdom, that it is carried on largely by his subordinate agents, the "elders" and the "living creatures," with himself at their head.

VERSES 9-II.—*And when these beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne they are and were created.*

These verses teach us the worship that the beasts and elders render to Jehovah. 1. The "beasts," or "living creatures," take the precedence, showing that ministers are to be first in every good work, and should be ready to join first in every song that is sung to the praise of Jehovah. 2. The "elders" follow, teaching us the harmony that existed between the ministers and the elders in giving God praise. "They cast their crowns before the throne." This is in token of reverence for Jehovah as their Creator and Redeemer, counting themselves nothing and him everything; and they burst forth in the chorus, "Thou art worthy," &c. So should ministers and elders and people here render to God the "calves of their lips," in anticipation of that song in the New Jerusalem which the saints shall sing world without end.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER IV.

1. What is meant by the opening of the door?—The removal of every obstacle to John's full view of what was passing within.

2. What is meant by the expression, "come up hither"?—The welcome accorded to John to see and hear.

3. Who is this who "sat on the throne"?—Jehovah, enthroned as a king in his glory.

4. Why is he represented as "a jasper and a sardine stone"?—As the jasper is bright, and conveys a variety of colours, and the sardine red, the two may be designed to embody his brightness and glory, and the mercy and justice inherent in his attributes.

5. Why is he represented as surrounded by "a rainbow"?—As all the colours are blended in the rainbow, so all glory shines out in the person of Christ.

6. Why does its prevailing colour appear to John "like an emerald"?—As the emerald is always green, so Christ's glory never fades, and the covenant of peace made with him, in which his people are included, is ever secure.

7. Why "four and twenty elders upon the seats round about the throne"?—Corresponding to the twenty-four courses of the priesthood. (1 Chron. xxiv. 18.)

8. Whom do these elders represent?—We think the priests under the Old Testament, as the rulers and guides of the people.

9. Why are they represented as "sitting"?—To show the privilege they enjoy, sitting with him in his throne.

10. What is meant by their being "clothed in white raiment"?—Their purity—that they had washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.

11. What do the crowns of gold mean?—That they reign as kings with Jehovah.

12. What are we to understand by the "seven lamps of fire"?—The perfection of the light of the Holy Spirit.

13. What is meant by the "sea of glass"?—The purity, we think, which all must pass through who stand "before the throne."

14. Why is it compared to "crystal"?—To show the purity of the sea, and how bright the saints are coming up from the fountain of a Saviour's blood.

15. Whom do the "beasts," or "living creatures," represent?—The ministers of the Gospel, we think, under the New Testament, as the guides of the people, and teachers.

16. Why "four"?—As inviting the people from the four quarters of the universe.

17. Why described as having "eyes before and behind"?—Denoting their watchfulness. "They are to watch for souls." (Heb. xiii. 17.)

18. Why are they "full of eyes within"?—They must look well to their own souls.

19. Why are they represented as "in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne"?—As near to God, they lived near him here in prayer, and now they are under the very shadow of his glory.

20. Why are they set forth as like a "lion, and a calf, and a man, and an eagle"?—For boldness, and strength, and wisdom, and activity or swiftness.

21. Why painted with "each six wings about him"?—Two to cover their face, in reverence, as in Isa. vi. 2, two to cover their feet, in humility, and two to fly, as active in God's cause.

22. What is the meaning of their never resting?—They are never tired doing God's work and his will.

23. What do we learn from the beasts and elders worshipping at Jehovah's throne?—The harmony that existed between the ministers and the elders in giving God praise.

CHAPTER V.

THE principal subject of this chapter is the opening of the sealed book. In the foregoing chapter John saw Jehovah himself in his glory, and the worship rendered to him; here he gets a glimpse of his mind and will revealed in a book. 1. The book is in the right hand of God himself. 2. It is taken into Christ's hand to be opened. We learn from this that those who have got a sight of God himself, by faith, will like to know his will, and do it.

VERSES 1-4.—*And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back side. . . . Look thereon.*

1. The book is in the right hand of God, and this would seem to indicate his power to carry out his decrees, as the right hand is the sign of power and authority.

2. We have the book itself. Why does God set forth his mind and will in a book? To show that he has everything arranged or written down. Nothing is at haphazard or by chance with him. There is no afterthought with him; all his decisions and purposes are arranged and written down beforehand. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." (Acts xv. 18.) This does not mean that God writes down with a pen, as we do, to keep him in remembrance, but, in accommodation to our thoughts, his designs are represented as written down in a book.

3. The "book is written within and on the back side." Why "on the back side" as well as "within"? Just, in all probability, that nothing is to be added to it or taken from it, like the law on the two tables. (Exod. xxxii. 15.) As if in the case of the tables, there was no *room* to add anything, they were full on both sides; so here there is no room to add anything, for it is sealed. Books of old were made of papyrus, the bark of the reed that grows on the banks of the Nile, in Egypt. These reeds were slit up and their bark put together, which formed leaves fit to be

written on when properly dried and prepared. Like books, or rolls, which were made of parchment and rolled up, so these barks, formed from the papyrus, were rolled up on sticks, like as maps are rolled up now, and in all probability the reference here is to one of these rolls, that when the writing was filled up it was sealed for security. The book may have contained seven of these folded rolls, the one lying inside of the other, and each sealed. God unfolds his mind and reveals it by degrees, as it pleases him. Why not written in the front? Because the future of the church is only to be described. The seven seals may mean the perfection of security of the book, that it cannot be opened or fathomed till it please God to reveal its contents, and that he unfolds his mind by degrees, rolling out one secret after another in the events of his providence, till the whole is complete.

4. The proclamation of the angels. "Who is worthy to open the book," &c. ? The angel is likely the same as that recorded in Chap. I. 1. "No man in heaven" means, likely, none of the spirits of just men made perfect; no man "on earth," neither prophet nor apostle; "under the earth" means, probably, none of the fallen angels or wicked spirits of the departed dead are able to come forth and reveal the counsels of God to John. No wonder that he wept when things had come to such a crisis as this, that in all God's universe there was not one to take up the challenge of the angel. But man's extremity is God's opportunity, and when darkness is greatest it is nearest the dawn.

VERSE 5-14.—*And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, &c. fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.*

We have here John's grief assuaged, and the angel's challenge answered. An elder, probably one of the four and twenty of the preceding chapter, who got near the throne and had intimation of what is coming, says, "Weep not," &c. God will not keep his people always in sorrow; he will give to them that mourn in Zion "beauty for ashes,

the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

We have a description of him who proceeds to open the book and to loose the seals.

1. He is represented as a "lion" for boldness, to accomplish his purpose in the subjugation of his people, fulfilling Jacob's prediction (Gen. xlix. 10), "unto him shall the gathering of the people be." This title here, we think, indicates Christ's divine nature, as the Messiah, who sprang from the tribe of Judah.

2. As "the Root of David." This shows him to be a king, with authority over his church to rule and make laws for it and govern it as its King and Head; and fulfils the prophecy of Is. xi. 10. that Christ was to be of the "root of Jesse," and hence of royal ancestry, according to David's line.

3. As a Lamb. As he is represented as a lion for boldness, so he is represented as a lamb, for meekness; but this is not the essence of the meaning, it is as a lamb for sacrifice, to make atonement or reconciliation for the sins of the people. In these are represented his great qualifications for his office—the Divine and human natures—in a word, the God-man Mediator, to lay his hand on an offended God and an offending people, and reconcile them through the blood of the cross.

4. As "in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts," &c. This teaches us that if we are to come to God it must be through him, as he is in the midst of the throne between God and the people; yea, if ever we are to get a sight of God it must be through him, as the "Lamb slain," and that from the foundation of the world. His "seven horns and seven eyes" denote his power to overthrow the enemies of his people and his watchfulness over them to preserve them, seven being the emblem of perfection both of power and knowledge. We have seen already (Chap. I. 4.) that the "seven Spirits" are a term of perfection for the Holy Spirit; and the Lamb here represented as having the "seven Spirits of God," can mean nothing else, we think, but the Holy Spirit resting on Christ in perfection. (Luke iv. 18.) Here we have in the Lamb power in perfection, knowledge in perfection, and

the Spirit in perfection. These "seven Spirits" sent forth into all the earth, would seem to mean that Christ, with the Spirit resting on him without measure, takes knowledge of all the affairs on earth, and fits him for being the final Judge, as cognizant of all that is transpiring on the earth.

5. As standing. This is in the position of an Advocate. He not only offers himself as a sacrifice as a Lamb, but he makes intercession for us, as an Advocate. What would be thought of an advocate in a court of justice who, when his client was being tried for his life, would sit and make a few dry statements to the judge and jury? Would it not be said that he was unworthy of the name, and unworthy to represent his client. If he is earnest in his client's advocacy he will stand up and use all the arguments and all the eloquence he can command to sway judge and jury, and save his client from death. So the Lord Jesus Christ stands up as our Advocate, and presents all the arguments drawn from his life and death to save us his poor clients, from eternal death. And when justice would accuse us in open court, and when the law would demand reparation for the violation of its precepts, and when the Father would say, "these sons of mine have been rebellious, erring children, and deserve banishment from my presence for ever," Christ points to his blood, and says, "Justice, does not that satisfy you?" and he points to his pierced hands and side, and says, "Law, does not that satisfy you"? and he points to the mercy-seat, dyed red with his gore, and says, "O my Father, does not that satisfy you? Spare these erring sheep, forgive these wayward children, bring them back again to thy house and thy home." And the Father says, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, they are accepted in the beloved."

We have, in the description of Christ given above, his great qualification for the work he undertook in the salvation of sinners. He is represented as a lion, indicating his mighty power invested with the power of Omnipotence. He is of the seed of David, as to his human nature, and withal a king to give laws, and government, and protection to his church. He is a Lamb for sacrifice, as "without shedding of blood there is no remission." He is in the midst of the throne, as a Mediator, between God and man.

He is standing as an advocate, or intercessor, pleading his people's cause. He has seven horns, to overthrow his and our enemies. He has seven eyes, denoting his watchfulness over his people, and as being endued with all knowledge to be the judge of quick and dead. And, finally, he has the seven Spirits, indicating the Holy Spirit resting on him in perfection, to anoint him as the Prophet, Priest, and King of his people, and through him to anoint all his people with the same spirit.

6. We have the worship given him. He undertook the task of opening the seals: "He took the book out of the right hand of him who sat on the throne."

1. The Church worships him. "The four beasts and the four and twenty elders" represent the Church "under the Old and New Testaments. He has redeemed her by his blood, and he saves her from the power of her enemies. He has a claim on her worship. These worship him with their harps, which,—as this instrument gives a sweet sound,—are a type of the sweetness of the melody they render to him. It is not to be understood as a literal harp in heaven, but as a voice and feeling tuned in unison, like the harp, to make a sweet sound before him. "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." (1 Cor. xiv. 15.)

They worship him with "golden vials full of odours." These are typical of their prayers, as the harps are typical of their praises. The vials are not small bottles, as the word ordinarily denotes, but they are the same as the censers that were on the altar of incense in the holy place. These were used for holding the incense when the high priest made intercession (Levit. xvi. 12-14), and here typify the prayers of the redeemed coming up as sweet incense before the throne. From the censers the smoke of the incense arose on the altar of incense, the sacrifice having been offered without, so our prayers come up like the smoke of the incense on the ground of the atonement, or Christ's propitiatory sacrifice, having been offered without the gate, and when he presents them through his all-prevailing intercession.

The subject of the song is *Christ's worthiness*. "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof."

When all others had failed, Christ alone had prevailed. When angels and archangels shrunk from the mighty task, when they hid, as it were, their diminished heads, Christ steps forward with the courage of a giant who never quailed when man's interests were at stake, and, conscious of his own might and his own dignity, and his own right to interfere in their behalf, he proceeds to tear aside the seals and to open the book. *The reason assigned for this worthiness.* "Thou wert slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Though they do not mention his divinity as one of the reasons, it having been mentioned already in the vision (verses 5, 6), they refer to his redemption particularly (it having been accomplished by his divinity) as affecting themselves, and keep an eye to his blood as the price of their redemption. They had sold themselves to Satan. Christ has paid the *lutron*, or price of their redemption, to satisfy God's justice and reconcile them to him. And the extent of this redemption is part of the song, that it included sinners "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

Further, this redemption not only included their deliverance from the guilt of sin and the power of sin, but their promotion to honour, such an honour as to be "kings and priests unto God." It is a great matter for a slave to get his liberty. Surely it is high honour for one in such a degraded position to be made a king and a priest. "Oh! glorious redemption," may the saints exclaim, "that raised us from being bondsmen of sin and Satan to enjoy such liberty, heirs of God and joint heirs of Jesus Christ, 'kings and priests unto our God!'"

Another part of the song is, "And we shall reign on the earth." The meaning of this seems to be, they shall reign on the land, or in the visible church, under Christ as their King and Head, who has redeemed them. We are not to infer that the song can only be sung by those transplanted from earth to heaven. Cannot every redeemed one sing it now? If John saw this in vision, it is only a prelude of what may be transacted on the earth. And surely the opening of the seals, as part of the vision, is only an intimation of Christ, the Mediator between God and man, laying open to the church the roll of God's

decisions or purposes to it here below. Hereafter in heaven, when all things are consummated, there will be no call for the revealing of his decisions. And if the one part of the vision has reference to the Church on earth, the other part must have reference to the saints' reign on it, and taking the most active part in the affairs of the Church. It is but natural that the saints should "reign" or rule "on the earth." They have been called to high dignity, as "kings and priests," and, as a man pre-eminent for piety has an influence in proportion to this, so the saints on the earth, in the visible church, have a proportionate influence, and reign or bear sway according to their gifts and graces.

2. The angels take up the chorus, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." It is to be noted that when the angels are joined with the beasts and the elders they don't say, "Thou hast redeemed us," nor is that form of phraseology put in the refrain when their voices are added to the choir, for they were never redeemed, as they had never fallen. How accurate is the Word of God, that it never commits itself to a solecism, or an impropriety in language. The great numbers most likely included not only the "many angels," but also the countless hosts of all the redeemed ones. They all join in ascribing to the Lamb "*power*"; but he must be slain to receive power. Had he not that power which made all these (John i. 3), and how is it that he must be "slain," as the song indicates, to receive that power? We apprehend that the "power" here, while not excluding his omnipotent power, means specially his power to save sinners from hell and take them to heaven, which he could not have done but that he was slain, for "without shedding of blood is no remission." "*Riches.*" This means, probably, his being clothed with all the attributes of the Divine fulness, that there is enough in him for all needy souls. (John i. 16.) As there is in the sun enough of heat and light for the world, so there is enough of riches or graces in Christ for all the wants of the world. "*Wisdom.*" This refers to his knowledge in carrying out the plan of salvation, not only in devising it with the Father and the Eternal Spirit, but in carrying it to a successful issue. It required great wisdom to execute it, as well as plan it.

"Honour." This means the merit that is due to him for his wonderful work of redemption and reconciliation, as the surety of sinners, taking their place and bearing their sins and carrying their sorrows. *"Glory."* This term means a shining out, as that of a candle; hence it is fitly ascribed to Christ, as the redeemed reflect his glory. As the diamonds shine out from the monarch's crown and reflect his magnificence and splendour, so the gems in the Redeemer's crown of his saved ones reflect his glory, as so many trophies of his grace. *"Blessing."* The chorus is sent up with the highest degree of praise which the whole heavenly choir can render, and that is blessing. It may be thus paraphrased: "A blessing on you, Jesus, our great High Priest, for salvation, for saving us 'beasts and elders' as having fallen, and saving us angels from falling."

3. Every creature joins in the anthem. "Every creature which is in heaven" hath been referred to already (verse 13). Every creature "on earth" comprises the righteous and the wicked, and teaches that even the ungodly are blessing God and the Lamb, and ascribing to them "honour and glory and power." It may be inquired—How do the ungodly ascribe these forms of blessing to Deity? We have seen it again and again that, when anything alarming occurs, as a sudden flash of lightning, or a sudden peal of thunder, or the announcement of a sudden death, the wicked are awed for the moment, and are heard exclaiming, "God bless us!" &c., though this is evanescent and soon forgotten. But what are we to make of the expression, "every creature under the earth"? This seems somewhat difficult. But carrying out the idea of the wicked on the earth, as we have stated already, "blessing God" on the occasion of some sudden impulse, may we not infer that the wicked "under the earth," or in the place of torment, are sometimes blessing God that their sentence is not more severe? for there are degrees of punishment in hell, and even those enduring the greatest punishment bless him that there is less punishment laid upon them than their sins demanded. "Such as are in the sea" take up the chorus. They have seen much of God's goodness and mercy in the mighty

deep, in preserving them when the waves roared and they were at their wits' end, and of their often miraculous deliverance, and they are quite willing to join in the song of thanksgiving. "And all that are in them," that is, all that are in the various places mentioned join in the doxology, coupling the Son with the Father, "blessing and honour and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." Here is the highest strain of worship rendered to the Lamb, as well as to Jehovah, which proves his Deity and his equality of homage with the Father.

The beasts and the elders join also in the refrain: and, as if they were not already satisfied with their amount of homage, in concert with the others, they throw themselves again flat before the Father and the Lamb. And now, in the last verse, the elders join in worship to "him" who is the one God "that liveth for ever and ever." What a grand display this whole chapter, of the passing of the book from the Creator to the Redeemer, to have it opened and the seals thereof loosed!

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER V,

1. What book is this that is mentioned here?—The Bible, revealing God's mind.
2. Why is the book represented as in "the right hand"?—As the right hand is the hand of power, it would indicate his ability to carry out his decrees in this book.
3. Why does God set forth his mind and will in a book?—To show that he has everything arranged, and nothing is at haphazard with him.
4. Why is the "book written within and on the back side"?—To show that nothing is to be added to, or taken from it.
5. Why not written on the front?—Because the future of the Church is only to be described in the book.
6. Why "sealed with seven seals"?—To mark its security.
7. Who is the "strong angel"?—Most probably that recorded in Chap. I. 1.
8. How are we to understand the expression, "under the earth"?—Its meaning, likely, is that none of the fallen angels, or wicked spirits, of the departed dead could open the book.

9. Who is "the Lion of the tribe of Judah"?—The Lord Jesus Christ, represented so for boldness and power to accomplish the purposes, and bring his people into subjection to himself.

10. Why is he "the Lion of the tribe of Judah"?—Because he was descended from Judah. (Gen. xlix. 10.)

11. Why "the Root of David"?—As descended from David, and a king. (Is. xi. 10.)

12. Why is he represented as "a Lamb"?—For sacrifice, to make atonement.

13. Why "in the midst of the throne"?—If we are to come to God it is through him.

14. Why is he represented as standing"?—As our advocate, pleading our cause, he stands up as in earnest.

15. Why is he described as "slain"?—As a sacrifice for sinners, to reconcile them to God and God to them.

16. Why is he represented as "having seven horns and seven eyes"?—1. To push aside his and our enemies. 2. To watch over his people with unremitting attention.

17. Why is he depicted as having "the seven Spirits of God"?—Indicating the Holy Spirit in perfection resting on him.

18. What are we to understand by the "harps"?—Not as literal harps, but, as the harp gives a sweet sound, we are to understand voice and feeling tuned in unison like a harp.

19. What are we to understand by the golden vials?—The censers that were on the altar of incense in the holy place, typifying the prayers of the saints.

20. Why are they set forth as "full of odours"?—Denoting the prayers of the saints coming up with acceptance before God, perfumed with the incense of Christ's sacrifice.

21. What is the meaning of "We shall reign on the earth"?—They shall reign on the land, or the visible church, under Christ their King.

22. What are we to understand by the expression "under the earth"?—We think it refers to the place of torment, the hell of the wicked.

23. How do those there bless God?—That their torment is not more severe than it is.

24. Who are meant by "such as are in the sea"?—Mariners, and those who do business in the mighty waters.

25. Who are meant by "all that are in them"?—All that are in the various places mentioned.

CHAPTER VI.

THIS chapter gives an account of the opening of six of the seals. John sees in the first vision, or the first part of the vision, the golden candlesticks, and in the midst of them the Son of man in his glory. In the second part of it (Chaps. IV., V.), he sees the glory of Jehovah, surrounded by the beasts and elders, and that of the Lamb, with the universal worship ascribed to him; and he sees here, in the third part of it, the six seals opened.

VERSES 1, 2.—*And I saw when the Lamb opened. . . . to conquer.*

These verses contain the account of the opening of the first seal, and what it reveals.

I.—The opening of the first seal.

The Lamb proceeds to do so as his right. He is constituted the Mediator, and exercises that right. He has power to do it, for he is God as well as man. As an evidence of this right, and to show his qualification for the task, he proceeds at once to do it, and the seal yields to his power as the wax to the flame. As “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” he steps forward and unfolds the sealed book. “All power is given unto him in earth and in heaven.”

1. Accompanying the opening there is “the voice of thunders.” John calls attention to this stupendous undertaking. As thunder awes the mind and leads to solemnity, so here it would specially draw attention to what was taking place. When the law was given from Mount Sinai there was thundering, in all probability to awe the people into silence and warn them to keep off from the mount while the great transaction was taking place between God and Moses. And so here; lest John should stand back, like the Israelites, he is invited to come forward.

2. "One of the four beasts says, Come, and see." That is, look particularly at what is to take place as to the future unfolding of the history of the Church. We don't agree with some commentators, who say that the "come and see" is addressed to Christ, for what reason had he to be summoned to such an interview who was the Mediator himself and the principal actor in the undertaking? It is objected that the "come and see" could not apply to John, as at the opening clause of the verse he says, "I saw." The instance cited of the Israelites keeping back from the mount, we think, solves the difficulty. Where John might be disposed to stand back on account of the thunder, the beast, or the living creature, encourages him to draw near that he, as a witness for the Church, might see the transaction and report what had come under his own observation.

II.—What the vision reveals.

1. "A white horse." As a horse is the emblem of swiftness, and as messengers were used through him to carry despatches before steam was discovered or the telegraph was invented, he is here properly represented as carrying the messenger of the Gospel with the good news of salvation through the churches and to the world. Witness the horses in Zechariah's vision (chap. vi. 2). Why is the horse "white"? The emblem of purity. The design of the Gospel—the message of mercy to poor fallen sinners—is to purify them and make them white, that, washed in the blood of Jesus and sanctified by his Spirit, they may appear before him in the judgment "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." Jesus Christ "gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus ii. 14.) Another question arises—Why is the "white horse" of the Gospel at the beginning of the seals? Because all true reforms must begin with the Gospel. It is the only cure for Judaism, Mahometanism, Romanism, and Heathenism. "He sent his Word and healed them." (Psa. cvii. 20.)

2. The person "that sat on him." This was the Lord Jesus Christ, the prince of ministers, from whom they receive their commission, and the King and Head of the

Church. His ministers, in fellowship with himself, and carrying out the same glorious message, are represented also on white horses (chap. xix. 14); hence the servants are like the Master, and should be like him in purity.

3. His equipment. He is thoroughly fitted out for warfare against the powers of darkness, to subdue the nations by the power of the Gospel, and to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of himself. (1.) He has "a bow." This was the form of warfare of old before firearms were invented, and, with the arrow attached to it, it carried disaster into the ranks of the enemy. Christ's message, and that of his ministers, is more benevolent, for it is to strike the arrow of truth into the hearts of the enemies of the King, not that they may be slain, but that the heart of unbelief may be brought into subjection to King Jesus. It is a bloodless war, for the white horse is not dyed with gore, but retains his purity. While the Gospel is a mission of mercy to them that "are saved,"—yea, the "power of God"—it is "to them that perish, foolishness." (1 Cor. i. 18.) We should receive the Word in the truth of it and the love of it. (2.) "A crown." Christ is a king, and his mission, as well as that of his ministers, is to bring the nations into subjection under him. "A crown was given unto him." This shows that he had his commission from the Father, and that he was constituted King and Head of the Church, "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." (Psa. ii. 6.) No wonder that he was successful. "He went forth conquering and to conquer." This means either gaining victory after victory, which he did, or "conquering in order to conquer." That is, when he conquers one sinner by the power of his Spirit, he uses him as a missionary for the conversion of others. Take an example: he uses Peter on the day of Pentecost, through his sermon, to be the means of the conversion of 3,000 souls (Acts ii. 9-41), and these carried the truths of the Word, which was the means of their own conversion, to their respective countrymen, who in turn became missionaries to the conversion of others. Take the case of Philip the evangelist (Acts viii. 27) pressing home the truth on the Ethiopian eunuch's heart, and he carries that seed away to Africa; and in this way Christ goes on through his Word

“conquering and to conquer.” And so the wave of the Gospel will finally reach every shore of the world, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. The lesson to be learnt from this is, that parents and Sabbath School teachers, and tract distributors, and all Christians, having found Christ themselves, should use their influence to win other souls to him, that thus he may go on “conquering and to conquer.”

VERSES 3, 4. —*And when he had opened the second seal and there was given to him a great sword.*

We have here the red horse. This is the horse of war. There does not seem to be a lapse of time between the first and second seals. The events they introduce appear to be contemporaneous, for as soon as the Gospel goes out war follows in its tread. And this teaches us that war prepares the way, in many instances, for the further propagation of the Gospel. The ten Pagan persecutions, after the Gospel was promulgated, undoubtedly prepared the way for its further development, for the blood of the martyrs has proved the seed of the church. The persecution of Papal Rome following, against the Waldenses and Abigenses, and the cruelties of the Inquisition, made further way for it. At the Reformation, again, the ploughshare of war has been an effective agent in preparing the ground for the reception of the Gospel; and in the wars between Germany and France, under the Emperor Charles V. and Francis I. King of France, the German soldiers carried Luther's translation of the Scriptures along with them, and in this way Reformation seed was scattered into the furrows made by the ploughshare of war. Our Indian Empire, though obtained by war, has been prepared by this same hard ploughshare for missionaries and mission work, and now there are over half a million professing Christians there; and, had it not been for this, it would yet, in all probability, have been inaccessible to the Gospel. We are not defending war, but we have seen how God overrules it for good.

The Crimea War led largely to the opening up of the way for the Gospel in Turkey; for before it, it was death

to a Moslem, or the follower of the false Prophet, to become a Christian. Now, since the signing of the Hatti Cheriff, at the close of it, a man can profess whatever creed he pleases.

Need I refer to the late war in America for a confirmation of this statement. It was that war, cruel as it was, that gave the slaves their liberty. And now the freed men in Nashville College are being trained to go out as missionaries to their original land of Africa, to preach the Gospel to their brethren according to the flesh. How the ploughshare of war has opened up the way to their liberty, and has been overruled of God to send the Gospel to Africa by the very men who are fitted to bear the climate, and likely to be the most successful missionaries in that dark land!

The late war between France and Germany led the way for an opening of the Gospel in Italy. When the French soldiers, who had been the props of the Papacy for a number of years, had been withdrawn to assist at the war, the soldiers of Victor Emmanuel rushed in, and now there are ten religious denominations of Christians preaching the Gospel in Rome, and the Bible is sold publicly in the stalls of the market-place. To attempt to do this some years before this event took place would have been, if not death, certainly imprisonment, and that likely for a considerable time. The red horse of war is making way for the white horse of the Gospel, which is a Gospel of peace.

"Power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth." He does so for a while, but he prepares the way for the Gospel which paves the way for a substantial peace. The killing of "one another" is the result of war, and the "great sword" indicates the weapon. War in itself is a great evil, but what cause of thankfulness that it has been so often overruled, in the providence of God, for good.

VERSES 5-8.—*And when he had opened the third seal and with the beasts of the earth.*

These verses bring before our view the "black horse" of famine and the "pale horse" of death or of pestilence.

1. The "black horse of famine." "The balances" indicate that the food is to be by weight. This part of the vision, or the opening of the third seal, follows the former without any apparent break of time intervening, and shows that famine, as well as war, prepares the way for the Gospel. Instances to prove this might be adduced. The famine in Canaan (Gen. xlii. 2) led to the carrying of the knowledge of the truth to Egypt, by the removal of the children of Israel there. The famine in the land of Canaan again (Ruth i. 1), led to the carrying of the truth to Moab, through Elimelech and his family, and so impressed with it was Ruth (v. 16) that she returned with her mother-in-law, Naomi, to Palestine, and became the mother of Obed, the grandfather of David.

Again, the famine in the land led to the destruction of Baal's prophets and to the knowledge of the true God, for the people exclaimed, when they saw the fire falling and consuming Elijah's sacrifice, "The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God." (1 Kings xviii. 39.) The famine in Connaught, in 1846—47, prepared the way for the seed of the Gospel. The Gospel got a lodgement there then, which otherwise it would not have had. Scriptural schools were established and congregations organized which have continued till the present. And I have myself seen several who were brought at that time under the influence of Scriptural teaching, giving every evidence of a genuine Christian life and true conversion, who had formerly been Roman Catholics. And further, how many were led at that time to emigrate to America, who afterwards merged their faith in the Protestantism of the great Republic? Hence the black horse of famine prepared the way for the white horse of the Gospel. We learn the lesson then, that God often overrules apparent evil for good. He can make war and famine these dreadful scourges of mankind—to praise him, and to redound to his honour and glory.

"See thou hurt not the oil and the wine." Why are these to be exempted, when the "wheat and the barley" are to be so scarce that they are measured out by weight? In all probability because they were used as cures. Oil was a cure in the East for diseases. The skin became parched with the heat and led to sickness, and one of the best cures

was the rubbing of it with oil (James v. 14); which passage lends no countenance to anointing after the manner of the Roman Catholic Church, but as a cure in disease. Again, the wine is a stimulant in fainting, and while people in health have no need for it, it is often useful as a medicine (Prov. xxxi. 6).

2. The "pale horse." This represents death. The opening of the fourth seal seems also to be contemporaneous with the others. Pestilence almost invariably follows war and famine, and how appropriately here it is introduced in succession. The question arises—Does pestilence or death prepare the way for the Gospel? Doubtless it does, for as it is one of God's judgments it leads men to reflect and bow the knee when otherwise this would not have been the case. How often does the Gospel get an entrance into a locality, into a family, into the heart of an individual, when the soul is led to solemn thought and wafted to the sky beside the corpse of a friend or beside the open grave of a neighbour? And when this is of frequent occurrence, as in the time of pestilence, and when each individual may be thinking that he may be the next victim, how does the power of the Gospel, in many instances, subdue his hard heart, and lead him to reflect on the realities of eternity and prepare for it by believing on the Son of God?

What an influence had the pestilence in subduing the hearts of the people when they murmured against Moses and Aaron, in the overthrow of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and when there fell of them "fourteen thousand and seven hundred"? (Num. xvi. 49). Or what an influence had it on the people in the case of David numbering them, when there fell seventy thousand? (2 Sam. xxiv. 15). Or what an influence had the great plague of London, in A.D. 1665, of opening up the way for the Gospel, when there fell 68,596? Or what an influence had it in 1832, when so many perished of cholera, we do not exactly know? Yet, doubtless, since that time the cause of missions in this country has received an impulse, and there has been a stirring of the churches to such an unwonted activity as they seldom or never experienced before. Here again we see God can overrule apparent evil for good, and for his own glory.

"Hell followed with him," or "hades." This means the invisible region generally. The soul at death goes out of our sight into the invisible region—the righteous into life eternal, the wicked into the place of torment for ever. (Luke xvi. 22; Rev. xiv. 11). It is a solemn thought, and one in which we should stand in awe, that the moment the soul of a wicked man leaves the body it is to be in a place of torment for ever. Let sinners flee from this doom to "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." Faith lays hold on his blood, which "cleanseth us from all sin," and this faith "works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world."

"And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth." Some read—"power was given unto him," &c. But the text as it stands means that "power was given" to the four judgments, or the four horses, to act each according to his mission.

"The beasts of the earth" appear to mean that men, as ferocious as beasts, would glean what had been left of the four judgments "over the fourth part of the earth." Why the "fourth part"? God only permitted the judgments to extend so far. He does not give all the earth to destruction. Such was the case with the poor Waldenses. When they had been persecuted again and again, the troops of Louis XVI. of France and of the Duke of Alva went against them in A.D. 1686, and so wasted them by fire and sword that they almost exterminated them, and forced the bleeding remnant into exile. They were driven to Geneva, from which, after three-and-a-half years, the "eight hundred" returned to their native valleys.

VERSES 9-II.—*And when he had opened the fifth seal . . . should be fulfilled.*

We have here the opening of the fifth seal. And in connexion with it we have—I. What John saw, "the souls under the altar." The vision is transferred now from earth to heaven, that is, the details of it. It was all revealed from heaven; but part of its working, as we have seen, took place on earth. Now the scene is changed. The scene of the first four seals lay on earth; that of the

second three lies in heaven. It is worthy of remark, that there is no one, as in the former case, calling to John to "Come and see," or take notice of the vision. The reason may be assigned thus:—Either because each of the four beasts had already discharged his duty in calling his attention to what had transpired already; or, what is more probable, that the scene being in heaven now, curiosity would prompt him to look, instead of being called on to do so. The vision, though changed in place, is in all probability still one, and likely contemporaneous with what went before.

1. The position of the souls, "under the altar." John sees the souls, proving their existence in a spiritual state. They are not in purgatory, but "under the altar," or at the foot of the altar of incense in the holy place. As the altar of incense was in the holy place (Exod. xl. 5), typifying intercession on the ground of sacrifice, so these souls of the martyrs are in the holy place, or under the altar of incense, in token of the sacrifice of Christ in their behalf and in token of its being accepted of the Father for them. The priest stood at the altar of incense to make intercession on the ground of the sacrifice that had been offered up on the altar of burnt-offering; so these souls are safe under the shadow of the Great High Priest, whose prayers come up on their behalf on the ground of his propitiatory suffering for them "without the gate." (Heb. xiii. 12.)

2. Their cruel treatment on earth. They were slain. This was principally by Pagan Rome during the period of the ten Pagan persecutions, which lasted nearly 300 years, till the time of the Emperor Constantine the Great, when the Christian church got toleration. They "were slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held." For holding the truth and making it known, as witnesses for it, they were persecuted by the Roman Emperors and their subordinates because they refused to bow down to the idol gods of the heathen. In the Catacombs at Rome—that is the subterraneous caverns out of which the materials for building the city were taken—are found numerous monuments bearing date of the death of the martyrs and the persecutions they suffered. These Catacombs, it is

said, would measure 900 miles in length. Among other memorials are jars, containing blood collected as it flowed from the martyrs' veins. And it is noticeable, and very remarkable, that on the stones and monuments to their memory there is no prayer to saint or angel or Virgin Mary, and no mention of such a place as purgatory, thus showing that many of these souls that were martyred shortly after the Apostolic age had no sympathy with Rome, and had not learned her doctrines or practices. They were slain also by Papal Rome.

3. Their clothing. "White robes were given unto every one of them." These were clothed with the righteousness of Christ, which the "white robes symbolise. They got them as a gift (Rom. v. 17) when they believed in Christ. As the guests at the marriage feasts of the Jews got wedding garments, so here, at the marriage supper of the Lamb, all Christ's accepted guests have on robes of his righteousness (Matt. xxii. 11). They were condemned of the world; they are approved of God, and have been "accepted in the Beloved."

II.—What he heard. What "was said unto them—that they should rest yet for a little season"—that is the time of the rise and progress of the Papacy, when it would kill other martyrs. They are to cease from crying for vengeance, for this time—"a little season"—they had been wondering how long vengeance was deferred on their murderers. God, to whom vengeance belongs, has a good reason for deferring it. They are to understand this, and rest satisfied for a time. We are not to imagine that they are actuated by vindictive motives, or crying for vengeance on their enemies, as wicked men do, for that is contrary to the Gospel (Matt. v. 24), but wondering that God, who has said, "vengeance is mine" (Rom. xii. 19) is so long in repaying it. We learn here,—1. That these souls were not asleep, or in a dreamy state, as some teach, that the soul remains in a dreamy state from death till the resurrection. The text is opposed to such a view, for the souls here are awake and active, and wondering at the length of time elapsing till the retribution of their enemies, which God says he will "repay." We learn, 2. That the souls of the righteous pass immediately into glory, and get

the privilege of standing "under the altar" of incense, as we have seen, very near the throne. The "little season" includes the time that should elapse, "until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled,"—namely, the time until Papal Rome has done her worst in sending kindred martyrs like themselves, as Pagan Rome did of old, to the death. Then will God take vengeance, and they are to rest satisfied till that.

VERSES 12-17.—*And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal . . . who shall be able to stand?*

These verses bring under our notice the opening of the sixth seal, contemporaneous with the others, and we have—

I.—The wonderful scenes occurring in connexion with it. 1. The "earthquake." This means a change of opinion, or a moral shaking of Paganism. There is an upheaving of Christianity from the depths to which it had been sunk by persecution. Constantine the Roman Emperor has now come to the throne. He attained this elevation in A.D. 306, and in 312 he gives toleration to the Christians. And now Paganism, which before had been in the ascendancy, is on its trial and sinks before Christianity. In some 15 years from the toleration Paganism is almost swept from the political horizon, and in 58 years hence nearly the whole of the Roman Empire has become nominally Christian. 2. "The sun became black as sackcloth of hair." "The sun" would appear to be the political sun of Paganism, which is now eclipsed and shrouded in darkness by the superior light of Christianity. The system which reigned and persecuted so long has now got its death-blow and is mourning over its fallen grandeur, as those that put on sackcloth when fallen from a high estate. 3. "The moon became as blood." This I take to be the fallen priesthood of Paganism. Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun, so do the ministers of a religion reflect the light of that religion. When the religion of Paganism was proscribed the priesthood had no light to reflect, and it became "pale as the moon." 4. "The stars of heaven fell unto the earth." These seem to be the rulers

of the Empire. The Empire had now, at the beginning of the 4th century, several churches. In the beginning of this century the Roman Empire had four sovereigns, of whom two were superior to the others, and bore the title of Augustus, namely, Diocletian and Maximianus Herculus. The two inferior sovereigns, who bore the title of Cæsars, were Constantius Chlorus and Galerius Maximianus. Maxentius held Africa and Italy; Maximianus was Emperor of the East; Constantine Chlorus, father of Constantine the Great, held the West, or governed in Spain and Gaul. The governor of the East having died and that of Africa and Italy having been defeated by Constantine the Great, at the Milvian bridge, near Rome, in A.D. 412, one star after another fell, and liberty of worship was given to the Christians. They fell "as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind." They fell as figs, not when they are ripe, dropping off of themselves, but like the figs when the tree is "shaken of a mighty wind." They were forced to fall, and the ruin was the greater. 5. "And the heaven departed as a scroll." Paganism was swept from the face of the political heaven, and became shrivelled as a scroll when it is rolled up, without any liberty to unfold itself. 6. "And every mountain and island were moved out of their places." This refers, we apprehend, to a change of government. Hitherto the government was Pagan, now it is Christian. The "mountain" means the chief men of state, and the "island," the inferior magistrates. All these were removed, and gave place to others in the administration of the government.

II.—How the people are affected by the opening of it. 1. "The kings of the earth, and the great men, &c., hid themselves." A perfect hurricane of revolution had overtaken them, and they are glad of any refuge from the storm. Paganism had its day, and now Christianity is going to supersede it, which is the cause of such terror to its mighty men. In all probability there is a change of officers in the army, Christian officers, in many cases, taking the place of their Pagan predecessors. The "bondmen" are the slaves under Pagan rule, and from their ignorance of Christianity they are afraid that their position will be even

worse than it was before ; and hence they are affected with the general panic, and, with the others, look out for safety. The freemen are their masters, some of them so, and now that their hold of them, as they think, with Christianity, will be gone or relaxed, they are trembling for fear, and are also carried away with the panic. 2. They “said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us,” &c. Any shelter at all, in this crisis, they look on as a boon. They knew they had persecuted Christianity to the death, and now they are afraid of the same doom to themselves, and that God and “the Lamb,” in retributive justice, are about to pour out the vials of their wrath upon them, and no wonder they are afraid. They prefer the mountains and rocks to fall upon them and cover them, rather than to be slain with the sword, as they expected, when Christianity would wield the sceptre. Their system of Paganism had no resurrection, nor rewards or punishments, and as there was no future retributive justice, they thought thus to be screened from the temporal judgment that was coming. Vain hope ! “God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” (Eccles. xii. 14.)

III.—Why they are affected by the opening of it. 1. “The great day of his wrath is come.” This is not to be looked upon as the day of judgment, for Paganism had no idea of such a day, as we have seen, but a day of vengeance or retribution for their persecution of the Christians. 2. “Who shall be able to stand ?” They looked upon God as a great Spirit who had power over the affairs of the universe, and they say, now he is angry, and “who shall be able to stand,” or abide his indignation ?

Note—This is a lesson that even Christians should learn, and when they know that sin has offended God and that he must take punishment for it, either on the sinner, or on his surety, Christ Jesus, well does it become them to be reconciled to him through this Surety, and act on the exhortation of the Psalmist in the second Psalm, “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they who put their trust in him.”

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VI.

1. Why is the opening of the seal accompanied with "the noise of thunder"?—To call attention to the solemn proceedings, as thunder produces awe.
2. What does the horse represent?—The swiftness of the message of the Gospel through the world.
3. Why is the horse "white"?—To denote the purity of the message that is from God.
4. Why is the white horse of the Gospel introduced at the beginning of the opening of the seals?—Because all true reforms must begin with the Gospel. "He sent his Word, and healed them." (Psalms cvii. 20.)
5. Who is "he that sat on the horse"?—We think, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Preachers, and the King and Head of the Church.
6. What is meant by the "bow"?—As the bow of old was the ensign of war, so the bow that Christ wears is the ensign that he carries disaster into the ranks of the enemy.
7. What is meant by the "crown"?—The victory that the Gospel wins over all opposition, in subduing sinners to King Jesus.
8. What is meant by the "red horse"?—The horse of war, as war often prepares the way for the Gospel and the Gospel's further progress.
9. How does he take peace from the earth?—Only for a time, as there is no peace in the time of war.
10. What is the temporary mission of the "red horse"?—"That they should kill one another," as the act of war too plainly manifests.
11. What is meant by the "great sword"?—The emblem of war.
12. What is meant by the "black horse"?—The horse of famine.
13. What do the balances indicate?—That the food was to be distributed by weight. Famine often prepares the way for the Gospel.
14. Why are "the oil and the wine" not to be hurt, "when the wheat and the barley" are to be measured out?—Probably because they were used as cures, or medicine, and they were not to be subjected to the same restrictions as the food.
15. What is meant by the "pale horse"?—Death, or pestilence.
16. What is the meaning of hell following with him?—The word "hell" here means "hades," or the invisible regions, where the soul goes out of sight as soon as it leaves the body; and hence, by the pestilence, many souls would go to "hades," or follow "him," the pale horse.

17. What is meant by "power being given unto them"?—That power was given to the four judgments, or the four horses, to act each according to his mission.

18. What are we to understand by the "beasts of the earth"?—Men as ferocious as beasts, as they would glean what had been left of the four judgments.

19. Why the fourth part of the earth?—God only permitted his judgments to extend so far. He does not give all the earth to the destroyer.

20. Who are the souls "under the altar"?—Those slain by Pagan Rome during the ten Pagan persecutions.

21. What is the meaning of "under the altar"?—Under the altar of incense, or Christ's intercession. As the priest, at the altar of incense (Exod. xl. 5), made intercession on the ground of sacrifice, so these souls are safe under the shadow of Christ's intercession, on the ground of the sacrifice he offered in their behalf.

22. Why were they slain?—For their testimony to the truth, in refusing to worship the heathen gods.

23. Is their prayer for vengeance vindictive?—No, but they are wondering why God is so long in taking vengeance on their enemies.

24. What is meant by their "white robes"?—The righteousness of Christ made over to them as a gift. (Rom. v. 17.)

25. What is meant by the "little season"?—The period of the rise and progress of Papal Rome, who would slay other martyrs as Pagan Rome.

26. What is the meaning of their resting for this time?—That they should cease to cry for vengeance.

27. What is meant by the "great earthquake"?—A change of opinion, or a moral shaking of Paganism. Paganism now goes down, and Christianity goes up.

28. What is meant by "the sun becoming black as sackcloth of hair"?—The political sun of Paganism fell before Christianity, and became eclipsed.

29. How did "the moon become as blood"?—The moon, which represented her religion, fell with the political sun.

30. What are we to understand by the phrase, "The stars of heaven fell unto the earth"?—The rulers of the Pagan Empire fell from their lofty position, through the change that had taken place.

31. How did "the heaven depart as a scroll when it is rolled together"?—Paganism was swept from the political heaven, and became shrivelled as a scroll when it is rolled up, without any liberty to unfold itself.

32. What is the meaning of "every mountain and island were moved out of their places"?—The "mountain" would appear to mean

every chief man of state, and the "island," every inferior magistrate, owing to the change of government that took place.

33. Who is meant by "every bondman"?—Every slave under Pagan rule.

34. Who are the "freemen"?—The masters of the slaves. The panic affects every grade, from the kings to the slaves.

35. Why "hide themselves in the dens and rocks," and call to the mountains and rocks to fall on them?—They would rather be thus covered than be exposed to what they expected when Christianity would reign. They had persecuted it, and they expected to be punished by God and "the Lamb" for their treatment of it.

36. What is meant by "the great day of his wrath"?—The day of vengeance, or retributive justice on Paganism, for her idolatry and persecution of the saints.

CHAPTER VII.

THE events contained in this chapter occur between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals. In the former we had commotions in the State, in the latter we have corruptions in the Church, and these events occur between the two, as setting forth a time of peace, exhibited to our view in the form of two visions; the first sealing a select number of the Jews, and the second describing the ultimate happiness of a large number of Gentiles. This teaches, for John's encouragement and ours, that, notwithstanding what may happen, God will still have a seed to serve him as long as the sun and moon endure.

VERSES 1-3.—*And after these things I saw four angels . . . sealed the servants of God in their foreheads.*

These verses set forth the restraint laid on the winds by the four angels.

“After these things” means after what John saw in the former part of the vision in connexion with the opening of the seven seals, or after the establishment of Christianity by Constantine the Great. One would have expected, after Christianity had got toleration from her long persecution, that she would have been very humble and spiritual, and increased exceedingly. This was not exactly the case; for when she began to bask in the sunshine of the State, she grew proud and haughty, fell into many errors in doctrine, and she must be scourged still further in order to the purification of her faith.

1. We have the restraint laid on the winds. They are the instruments used for this scourging or punishment; but before they go out, or get this liberty, the servants of God must be sealed; and the angels are employed, in the mean time, in restraining them. God often employs angels

to carry out his designs; he sent an angel to roll back the stone from the door of the sepulchre; he sent Gabriel to explain to Daniel the vision; he sent him to announce the birth of John the Baptist; he sent him to announce the glorious tidings of a Saviour's conception; and why not make use of them now to restrain the winds during his pleasure? The angels have their position, "on the four corners of the earth." As the wind blows from the "four quarters," it is probable that each angel took his stand on one of the quarters to guard it there.

"The earth" I take to mean the Church. The wind of persecution and trial is restrained from blowing on it till the servants of God are sealed. "The sea" means the mass of the people commingled like it, whether professing connexion with the Church or not. "The trees" I take to mean the ministers set over the people, standing up like trees, and these have respite for a short time before the trial comes.

2. We have the "other angel." He is evidently the Angel of the Covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ, for who holds the "seal of the living God" but He? His coming is represented as from the East. As the sun rises in the east, so he is "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel." His cry is, "Hurt not the earth sealed in their foreheads." He here asserts his authority over the angels, that they have to act according to his bidding. These four angels cannot "hurt the earth or the sea" till it is "given" them, or permitted them. "The earth" includes the trees, which are mentioned in the next verse.

3. The time this restraint was to continue. Till the servants of God were "sealed in their foreheads." This shows God's care over his people. He will not let destruction come till he has sealed them. Before the flood comes he shuts Noah in the ark (Gen. vii. 14); before Sodom is destroyed he takes Lot out (Gen. xix. 15, 16); and before the tempest of persecution rages he must seal his saints with the mark of security.

Why "sealed in their foreheads"? In Ezekiel's prophecy (ix. 4) the man in linen sets "a mark upon the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry for all the abomina-

tions done" in the city. So here, God's people, who in all probability mourned over the defections of the Church, have the seal of the living God stamped upon them. "They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in the day when I come to make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him" (Mal. iii. 17). The mark is in a prominent place, to be seen by all, that God has set them apart for himself. Saints are always conspicuous for being sealed with God's mark, which is the Holy Spirit. They let their "light so shine before men, that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father who is in heaven."

By whom sealed? By Christ and the four angels. Christ has the seal of the living God, and as he uses the angels to restrain the winds from injuring the elect in the meantime, it is but natural that he would allow them to look on or engage while he performs this act of security.

VERSES 4-8.—*And I heard the number of them which were sealed . . . twelve thousand.*

These verses set forth—1. The number sealed, "an hundred and forty and four thousand," a definite number for an indefinite. We are not to infer that the sealing was confined exclusively to these, or that there were no others sealed; but as these twelve tribes were the representatives of his chosen people, God would show that he sets his mark upon all his own, and sets them apart for himself.

2. The tribes from whom they are sealed. Judah is placed first, either because it pitched next to the camp and led the van in marching (Numb. ii. 3), or because Christ descended from it (Heb. vii. 14). Ephraim and Dan are wanting. They are the first to espouse and set up idolatry after their settlement in Canaan. The man Micah, who set up the graven image and the molten image, was an Ephraimite (Judg. xvii. 1-4), and the Danites stole these and set them up in their own tribe (Judg. xviii. 17-30). Afterwards they are both combined in idolatry, when Jeroboam sets up an idol in Bethel in the tribe of Ephraim, and another in Dan (1 Kings xii. 25-29). Joseph is substituted for Ephraim, and Levi for Dan. After the revolt of the ten tribes from

under the power of Rehoboam (1 Kings xii), Jeroboam is jealous, lest if they go up again to worship at Jerusalem with their brethren, as heretofore, he will lose his sway over them, and he has recourse to this expedient to secure their allegiance. It is worthy of remark, that this omitting of the names of the heads of the two tribes, on account of their idolatry, teaches us that God is a jealous God, that he "will not give his glory to another nor his praise to graven images." Let us beware of setting up any idol in our hearts, lest we should offend God, and our names be wanting in the day when he comes to accomplish the number of his elect.

VERSES 9-12.—*After this I beheld . . . might be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.*

I.—The number of the redeemed throng. No man can reckon it. It is composed of "all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." The wild man of the woods shall have his name in the muster roll, the tawny New Zealander shall be part of the mighty throng, the dark African shall wear the white robes, and the swarthy Indian shall share the palm.

1. Their position. They "stood before the throne, and before the Lamb." We think this is indicative of their joy; for when people are highly elevated they could not content themselves sitting. They had obtained salvation, and they ascribe the glory of it to God and the Lamb, and in order to give full scope to their utterance they stand up and ring out the acclamation. Besides, their standing up shows their respect in the presence of such august Personages. To sit in the presence of the Queen, and before her throne, would betray want of courtesy and respect, and here these redeemed ones show their respect by standing up and exclaiming, "Salvation to our God and unto the Lamb." They have a full heart of gratitude for their salvation, and they do not fail to unburden their feelings.

2. Their clothing. They have "white robes." These are the white robes of Christ's righteousness. They "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Other blood dyes red, this white. This

righteousness was reckoned theirs in the day of their justification and acceptance (Rom. v. 17), and made over as a free gift when they believed; and now, clothed in it, they stand "before the throne and the Lamb," and Jesus Christ will not disown his own raiment.

3. Their victory. They have "palms in their hands." The victors in the Grecian games wore palms. Here the redeemed throng carry theirs, having got the victory over all their enemies through the Captain of their Salvation. They have come off, through him, conquerors, and "more than conquerors" (Rom. viii. 37).

II.—A sketch of the angels. 1. Their position. They are "round about the throne." They are messengers to go out at God's bidding, and, as servants round about the master, go to do his will, so the angels round about God's throne are to be ready at his call to dispatch his errands. But they stand also about "the elders and the four beasts." They are in the outside of the circle, to be entirely free, and that no impediment may stand in their way when ordered to go on their errands. The question might be raised here—Do "the elders and the four beasts," who represent the priests under the Old Testament and the ministers under the New (see notes on Chap. IV. 4-6), get nearer to the throne than the angels, when the latter are standing in the outside of the circle? Or is it that the one party are redeemed sons and daughters and the other only servants, that the distinction seems to arise? We think not; but to give them, as hinted already, more liberty, being outside, for acting as messengers of mercy.

2. Their act of worship. They "fell before the throne on their faces." This shows their great reverence; and though they are high themselves, they bow low before God and ascribe to him the honour due to his name. Note—This is a lesson to us. If the angels, so high in power and so high in dignity, thus deign to stoop so low, how should we, who are but creatures of the dust, abase ourselves in God's presence, who, "as a Spirit, must be worshipped in spirit and in truth"?

VERSES 13-17.—*And one of the elders answered . . . and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

We have in these verses—

I.—The character of the redeemed. John sees a great white-robed throng, and he wishes to know more of them. The elder interrogates him as to who they are, and whence they came. The question might arise—Why does “one of the elders” ask a question which it is his own province to answer? Likely to let John see his own ignorance, and how far the heavenly inhabitants excel us in spiritual knowledge. John replies, and asks the elder himself to solve it. He is one of that number, and can explain the whole matter.

1. They were an afflicted people. They have come “out of great tribulation.” God’s people have been an afflicted people in all ages. David says, “the wicked have no bands in their death, they are not troubled as other men, neither are they plagued as other men,” and he could not understand how it was that he, who served God morning, noon, and night, was so afflicted, till he went into the sanctuary and learnt it there, that “whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” Afflictions have a tendency, when they are sanctified, to loosen our hold on the world, to bring us nearer to Christ, and make us fitter for heaven.

2. They were an active people. They “washed their robes.” They were not idle, till they got their filthiness and pollution washed away in the blood of the Lamb. In regeneration we are passive, the Spirit takes the initiative, planting the seed or kindling the spark of Divine grace in the soul. In conversion we are active, for we become a willing people in the day of God’s power, and he engages in the work, “work out your own salvation for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure” (Phil. ii. 12, 13). In sanctification the flame burns these cold hearts warm, the ice is broken up, and the gushing stream shows the fulness of the affection. They have been active in prayer, active in pleading for the Holy Spirit to convince them of their sin, to show them their need of a Saviour, and to enable them to believe on him. They have been active in the means of grace, that they might be brought in contact with the blood of Christ

which washes the robes and "cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7).

3. They were a wise people. They went to the real fountain. They were not satisfied with any merits of saints or angels; they were not satisfied with anything of their own to take away sin. Like Naaman the Syrian, they went to the real Jordan, and they came out clean. They washed in the fountain of a Saviour's blood, and they went on their way rejoicing. They went there, and nowhere else, because Christ invited them to go to himself, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28).

4. They were a persevering people. They did not stop short till their robes were made white. Some begin well, but don't end well. They were not satisfied with half measures, knowing that God has threatened to "spue the lukewarm out of his mouth." They were not like Pliable, in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, who, because he met with the "Slough of Despond" in the heavenward journey, turned back to the City of Destruction. No, they persevered amidst all difficulties till their robes were "made white in the blood of the Lamb." Let us, by Divine grace, and by the aid of the Holy Spirit, follow their example, and give God no rest day or night, wrestling, as Jacob did with the Angel of the Covenant, till we get the blessing. And in the day we seek God with our whole heart he has promised that he will be found of us.

II.—Their employment. "They serve God day and night." "Therefore," because they have their robes "washed," and made "white in the blood of the Lamb," are they before the throne, and serve God day and night in his temple. The one a consequence of the other. It is only with robes made white in the fountain of a Saviour's blood that any find their way into this temple. Nothing of their own introduces them there; it is something done for them by another that gives them the passport,—"the blood of the Lamb." They "serve God day and night in his temple." They were not idle here, neither are they idle there, they "serve him day and night." The question arises—What is the service they render? We have the answer in chaps. v. 9; xiv. 3; xv. 3—singing. This seems

to be the principal employment in heaven. It is an act of thanksgiving; but whether there shall be any other employment we are left much to conjecture. There is no need for prayer, they have attained the summit of happiness; and praise, as it is a pleasant employment, and an act of thanksgiving, seems to be the fittest. The "temple" is heaven. There is a reference here, we think, to the temple service under the Old Law, which was an active one, the priests being at their calling, and the singers making melody—all busy in their respective callings. So here, all are priests to God, and render him the homage of their hearts and tongues, they "serve him day and night in his temple." And this teaches us that we are not to be slothful; no, we are to be active here as well as hereafter. And Paul inculcates the lesson of diligence (Rom. xii. 11), "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

III.—Their happiness.

1. They have God's presence with them. "He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." And whenever and wherever he is with us we may be happy. His presence is the very essence of heaven. If to be in the presence of a loved friend and enjoy that one's society, is happiness, how much more—ininitely more—to be in the presence of him who loved us with an everlasting love, and brought us through all our tribulation to be with him for ever. He gave his Son to die for us and his Spirit to sanctify us, and make us meet for his presence, and such exalted society.

2. "They hunger no more, neither thirst any more." Here some of them were hungry and thirsty, and begged their bread from door to door, but now all this has passed away, and God's presence is more than a supply for all their wants. The ideas in the text have a reference to the temporal and the spiritual hunger that his people often experienced. Not only were some of them often in need of the necessities of life, but many often hungered and thirsted after righteousness that they might be filled. Now they are filled without any more craving, and every want is supplied to the very letter.

"Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." The idea seems to be taken from a weary traveller plodding his way through the sandy deserts of the East, under a burning sun. How he would long for a shade as a cooling retreat! and when he had found it, and, perhaps, as was often the case, a refreshing stream beneath, how would he rejoice, as one having found great spoil! Here is the happiness of the redeemed. They are screened safely in heaven as a temple, where no burning sun will any longer scorch them or dim their eyes with its glare.

3. They have the Lamb's presence. "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters." This further enhances their happiness. It was happiness to have God's presence; it was happiness to have their hunger and thirst supplied in abundance; it was happiness to be shaded for ever from the rays of the scorching sun; but this is the climax of their happiness, to have the constant superintendence of the Lamb, who lived for them and died for them and rose for them and pleads for them.

Here Christ is introduced in his old capacity as a Shepherd and a Guide, "He shall feed them and lead them." He did this for his people in the wilderness when they wandered through the desert, and he did this for them all when they wandered through the desert of this world here below, and he is represented as resuming it in the temple above in heaven; and we think he could not be represented in a more beautiful and endearing capacity, nor in one more fitted to enhance the happiness of heaven. When are the sheep and lambs of the flock more happy than when the shepherd is leading them by the green pastures and the quiet waters? And what could make the flock more happy in heaven than to have the Good Shepherd leading them by the green pastures and the still waters, and supplying their every want, yea, filling their hearts to overflowing with his own presence? The very essence of heaven consists in Christ's presence, and what must heaven be to have that presence for ever?

4. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." How it soothes the child, after sobbing and crying, when the parent stoops down and wipes away the flowing tears,

and speaks words of comfort and love to the throbbing heart. Then the grief is assuaged and joy comes back to the troubled conscience; so in heaven, when God stoops down and wipes away all tears. Are there tears in heaven? No; but the tears of earth, in a figurative sense, which might be represented as wiped away by God in heaven. Then the long night of sorrow and crying is ended, and joy beams in the face of the redeemed for ever.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VII.

1. What is meant by "the four corners of the earth"?—The different parts of the Church.
2. What is meant by the "winds"?—The winds of persecution
3. What are we to understand by "the sea"?—The mass of the people commingled like it.
4. What is meant by the expression, "any tree"?—The ministers set over the people, having a prominent position.
5. Who is the "other angel" from the East?—The Angel of the Covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. Who are the "servants of God" to be sealed "in their foreheads"?—His believing people, including the hundred and forty and four thousand. This last is a representative number for all God's redeemed people.
7. What is the meaning of their being "sealed in their foreheads"?—As a mark of God's ownership. They long sighed and cried over the defections of the Church, and Christ marked them in a prominent place to be seen by all.
8. Why is the tribe of Judah placed first?—Because it is next to the camp in the journeying of the children of Israel (Numb. ii. 3), or because Jesus Christ descended from it (Heb. vii. 14).
9. Which of the original tribes are wanting in this catalogue?—Ephraim and Dan, as they were the first to espouse idolatry (Judges xvii. 14; xviii. 17-30; 1 Kings xii. 28, 29).
10. What names are substituted for Ephraim and Dan, to make up the number 12?—Joseph, for Ephraim, and Levi, for Dan.
11. Why is the "great multitude" represented as standing?—We think, on account of their joy, besides their deference to the august **Personages on the throne.**

12. What are the "white robes" with which they are clothed?—The robes of a Saviour's righteousness.

13. What do the "palms in their hands" represent?—Their victory through the Captain of their Salvation.

14. Why are the angels represented as standing around "the throne"?—Ready to go out as messengers at God's bidding.

15.—What are we to understand by the "living fountains of waters"?—Fresh scenes of delight in heaven, opened to his people by the Lamb, as the shepherd leads the sheep to fresh streams for their pleasure.

16. What is meant by God's wiping away the "tears" in heaven? Are there tears in heaven?—No; but the tears of earth, in a figurative sense, which now have no existence in heaven.

CHAPTER VIII.

THIS chapter gives an account of the opening of the seventh seal and the sounding of the first four trumpets, which we think are designed to set forth the incursions of the Goths and Vandals and other barbarous hordes from the North of Europe and Asia, to punish a degenerate Church in the West, and to accomplish the overthrow of the Western Roman Empire. The majority of expositors agree that the seven seals represent the interval between John's time and the reign of Constantine the Great, and that the last three trumpets point to the rise and progress of the Man of Sin, or the great Antichrist, and the punishment inflicted by the Mahometans on a degenerate Church in the East. The Man of Sin was conceived about A.D. 476, the time of the fall of the Western Roman Empire. It rose in A.D. 606, and it was developed, in A.D. 755, into the temporal power of the Papacy. (See note at end of Chap. XIII.)

VERSES 1-5.—*And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour . . . and an earthquake.*

These verses record—

1. The silence in heaven. What is the meaning of it? It is not to be inferred that the exercise of heaven is suspended, for the four beasts (Chap. iv. 8.) “rest not day and night,” but they key to the meaning of the silence, we think, is found in Chap. vi. 10., where the martyrs are crying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” And as the trumpets are to be blown in introducing the rise of the above system, the martyrs rest, or are silent, “half an hour,” or the “little season” (Chap. vi. 11) of its continuance. The silence then would appear to be the silence of the martyrs for this space.

2. The service of the angels. These angels we take to be the same as the angels or ministers of the seven churches. (Chap. i. 20). They seem to have been mentioned before, when John calls them "the seven angels." As messengers, or ministers, they are used to announce the punishment of a degenerate Church in the West, with the overthrow of the State, the rise and progress of Romanism, and the punishment of a degenerate Church in the East.

1. What is meant by the trumpets? We understand the Gospel. Christ having opened the seals, or the book of God's decrees, which is called a "mystery" (Ephes. vi. 19), commissions his ministers to proclaim it in trumpet tones—to "cry aloud and spare not." The allusion seems to be to Ezekiel xxxiii. 3, where the prophet is to blow the trumpet and warn the people of the danger approaching. So these angels or ministers, like the prophet, are to announce the coming judgments, and warn the people to flee from the wrath to come.

2. Who is meant by the other angel? We understand the Lord Jesus Christ, the Angel of the Covenant. He stands at the altar of incense. The allusion is to the high priest making intercession on the ground of the sacrifice offered. (Exod. xxx. 1—10.) The Lord Jesus Christ having suffered without the gate, takes his own blood into the holy place, and on the ground of it makes intercession in behalf of his people.

The golden censer typifies, we think, the purity of his intercession. There is no alloy mixed with it. As the golden altar typified the Divine nature, on the ground of which his sacrifice was efficacious, so the golden censer typifies the purity of his intercession, on the ground of which it is also efficacious. The "much incense" denotes the *continuance* of his intercession. "He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. vii. 25). He offers the incense "with the prayers of all saints." The prayers of the saints are mixed with alloy. Sin mingles more or less with the prayers of the best men that ever lived. Christ takes these prayers—they come up through him as the Mediator—and presents them, perfumed with the incense of his own intercession, and thus, purged of their alloy,

they come up in an acceptable manner before the Father. "The golden altar before the throne" has its type in the altar of incense, which was in the holy place in the tabernacle. (Exod. xxx. 1, 8.) As the high priest there burnt incense to make intercession, so our great High Priest in heaven is represented as taking our prayers to offer them up there, on the ground of his own intercession.

The *success* of the intercession. "The smoke of the incense . . . ascended up before God." This intercession is accepted by the Father, for Christ says, "I know that thou hearest me always," and is the ground of our confidence that our prayers have access to the Father through Christ. "We are accepted in the Beloved." We learn here that all saints are praying people; and we learn the folly of praying to those who themselves have need of the intercession of another, who must take and present their prayers for them before the Father in order to their being accepted.

The *result* of his intercession. "And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth." The allusion is to the high priest, when he was about to ascend into the holy of holies, taking "a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar" of burnt-offering, and placing the incense which he held in his hands on it, that it might cover with a cloud the mercy seat when he sprinkled the blood. (Levit. xvi. 12—14.) So the Lord Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest, having carried his own blood into heaven, is not only successful in making intercession for us, but he takes "fire from the altar,"—that is, as I conceive, the flame of the Holy Spirit, who comes, as the result of his intercession, to give quickening to our dead souls, and to "take of his and show it to us." (John xvi. 15.) The Spirit is "cast into the earth," or comes to the earth, as the result of Christ's intercession. (John xvi. 7.) True, the Spirit was in the Church before Christ's ascension, for "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," but not to the same extent as since Christ's ascension. Jesus Christ having finished the work of redemption, and having opened the seals of God's decrees, sees something further requisite before the angels are commissioned to sound the

trumpets. The Spirit must come to give the trumpet of the Gospel power, and then the way is open for the successful preaching of it to the nations. And the "voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and earthquake," are the outcome of the preached Gospel, accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit. Without the "fire" of the Holy Spirit all our preaching is vain, it is "like a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

We are not to infer that every part of the vision begins where the other ends. We are rather to consider that, as one new phase of the vision after another arises to John's view, he traced the new part of it from its own starting point. And so here: while the seven angels are about to announce the rise of the great Antichrist, or the Papal power,—for while every false system is an Antichrist, this is the leading power,—after the reign of Constantine the Great, that does not preclude him from describing the effects of the Gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit from the time of Pentecost.

VERSES 6-13.—*And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets . . . wee, wee, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound.*

The angels now set about the work which was given them to do. We have here, in these verses, the sounding of the first four trumpets.

1. The first trumpet. "The first angel sounded." The consequence was "hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth." These omens would seem to mean the incursions of the Goths and Vandals on the Roman Empire from the year 396 till 410, to punish a degenerate Church in the West for its sins. After the time of Constantine heresies infested the Church, and licentious living was characteristic of the people, and God sends this scourge on them. The "blood" carries with it the idea of war, and "fire," that of destruction. But it will be objected, Why did I consider the "fire" of the 5th verse to mean the descent of the Holy Spirit, and here to mean destruction? I answer, in the 5th verse there is no

blood or slaughter mentioned, as here, hence the figure varies, and the meaning with it.

"And the third part of the trees was burnt up." That there was a limit to these incursions is here stated, for only "the third part" of the Empire was thus overrun. In the time of Constantine the Roman Empire was divided into three parts. The Western part, which belonged to Constantine, comprised France, Spain, Italy, Africa, and Britain. The Illyrian provinces belonged to Licinius, and the Arcadian provinces and Egypt to Maximian. It was on the Western part of the Empire that these calamities fell, and to which it is considered the first four trumpets had reference.

"The trees" mean the most prominent among the people, as the magistrates, the judges, and the clergy. These got their scorching in the general calamity. "The green grass" means the common people, not rising so high in their social standing as the others, yet, notwithstanding, they came in for their share; they suffered with the rest. We learn here that however great a calamity may be, it generally has its limits. God is merciful as well as just, and he says to wars and plagues and other calamities, as to the waves of the sea, "Hitherto shall thou come, and no farther." It is well that he is a sovereign,—

"And though his arm be strong to smite,
'Tis also strong to save."

2. The second trumpet. "The second angel sounded." The result was the likeness of "a great mountain burning with fire," which means, we think, the ravaging of Africa by the Vandals, under Geneseric, in A.D. 429. They came down over it like the falling of a great mountain burning with fire, and devastated it. Their slaughter made such a din and hissing noise as a burning mountain when cast into the sea.

"And the third part of the sea became blood." We have seen already (Note on Chap. vii.) that "the sea" means "the mass of the people commingled," or in motion like the sea, and here "the third of the sea," or the commingled people, "became blood," from the slaughter of these Vandals in Africa. "And the third part of the

creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died." "The creatures" mean frail humanity, whose life was taken away by these calamities; that is, the third part of the people who formed the sea of commingled humanity fell victims to the ravages of these freebooters. "The third part of the ships were destroyed." This means that the invaders not only destroyed the people, but, by means of their ships, ravaged the coasts of the Roman Empire and destroyed "the third part" of their shipping on the coasts of Italy, Sicily, and Sardinia.

3. The third trumpet. "And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp." This star is considered to mean Attalia, king of the Huns. These were a warlike people from the North of Europe and Asia, who came down as scourges on the Roman Empire about A.D. 450, and devastated it with fire and sword. This star fell upon "the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters." That is, he crossed the river Rhine and burnt to ashes numbers of the cities built on its banks. Thus were the rivers and fountains scorched by this falling star, whose brightness, by the burning he caused, was like a meteor in the heavens, and the quickness with which he precipitated himself on his enemies was like a falling star.

"And the name of the star is called Wormwood." After having burnt up the rivers, or the cities on the banks of the Rhine, he pushed his victorious career close to the Alps, where he turned to "wormwood," or bitterness, whatever places he came to, and left nothing but weeping and lamentation behind. "And the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter." Thus was the third part of the "waters," and the "fountains" from which the waters spring, embittered. And thus by this terrible affliction were many men scorched to death, having drunk the bitter dregs of fire and sword.

4. The fourth trumpet. "And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars." This means that while the Empire in its third part was deluged by land and sea with fire and sword for

its abounding wickedness, the sovereignty still remained, and the royal titles of dignity. But now suddenly Odoacer, the chief of the Heruli, from the North of Europe, forces Romulus Augustus, now Emperor, to resign the royal title (A.D. 476), and thus this "sun" fell from his dignity, and was "smitten" from the imperial firmament. The seat of empire is now transferred from Rome to Constantinople. Hence resulted the fall of the Roman Empire in the West. With the fall of the "sun," or the imperial dignity, took place that of the subordinates under him, which are represented by the "moon" and "stars." So far as the judges and magistrates under him were concerned, their political horizon was darkened in that "third part," and "the day," that is the political day, from their fall "was darkened;" "and the night likewise," that is to say, as the moon which lights up the night becomes darkened by a cloud, and the night gets dark, so when these minor rulers in the Empire had their light extinguished a political night of darkness set in.

"And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven . . . sound." This angel pronounces a "woe" on "the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound." Some read for "angel," an "eagle," the emblem of judgment: and such an opinion is supported by many of the oldest manuscripts. As an eagle is a bird of prey, and pounces with rapidity upon its victim, so judgment was to fall suddenly on the other parts of the Eastern Roman Empire for their sin. And the eagle is the harbinger of the woe coming, God thus giving warning of what he was about to do. The silence before the sounding of the first four trumpets, and the angels scattering the fire from the altar on the earth, indicated the judgments coming on the Western parts of the Empire which we have just noticed; and the "woe" now pronounced by this "angel"—for we take him to be the angel of verse 3 above, and not an eagle (an eagle not being otherwise introduced into the vision)—is the harbinger of the judgments coming next, under the other three trumpets, on the Eastern parts of the Empire.

Lessons—God metes out his judgments by degrees. The sins of the Western Empire were numerous and aggravated. Arianism prevailed; Pelagianism prevailed; Antichristian error in various forms prevailed—for while it culminates in the Man of Sin, it has various roots and branches. The very springs of truth were poisoned, and when men came to drink they got nothing but error to quench the thirsty soul. Besides, open profligacy and dissolute manners prevailed to such an extent that the very name of Christianity was disgraced by the shameless lives of its professors. But where sin abounds judgment is sure to follow, except the sin is repented of, and God in retributive justice sent the foregoing judgments for their sins.

Another lesson we may learn is, that when the Gospel is despised—which is the only cure for sin-sick souls and for the woes of the world—the consequence is positive evil and a hardening in sin, which is the precursor of coming judgment. On the other hand, how good it is to receive and embrace the Gospel in the truth and in the love of it, which brings every thought into subjection to King Jesus.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VIII.

1. What is the meaning of the "silence in heaven" for "half an hour?"—The silence of the martyrs crying for vengeance during the "little season" of the Man of Sin. (Chap. vi. 11.)

2. Who are "the seven angels"?—The ministers of the seven churches. (Chap. i. 20.)

3. What is meant by the seven trumpets?—The Gospel which the ministers were to proclaim in trumpet tones.

4. Who is meant by the "other angel"?—The Lord Jesus Christ, the Angel of the Covenant.

5. What is meant by the "golden censer"?—The purity of Christ's intercession.

6. What "altar" was this?—The altar of incense, in allusion to the high priest making intercession at the altar of incense.

7. What is the meaning of "much incense"?—The continuance of Christ's intercession. (Heb. vii. 25.)

8. What is the meaning of offering the incense "with the prayers of all saints"?—As the prayers of the saints are tinged with sin, Christ

takes these prayers and presents them to the Father perfumed with the incense of his own intercession.

9. What is meant by the "golden altar before the throne"?—Typically, where Christ makes intercession, in allusion to the altar of incense in the holy place of the tabernacle.

10. What is meant by "the smoke of the incense" ascending "before God"?—The success of Christ's intercession in behalf of his people. (John xi. 42.)

11. What are we to understand by filling the censer "with fire of the altar," and casting it "unto the earth"?—The "fire of the altar," we think, means the fire of the Holy Spirit, who comes as the result of Christ's intercession (John xiv. 16; xvi. 7), to give quickening power to his people on "the earth." Not only do his people's prayers come up through Christ's intercession, but the Holy Spirit comes down, like fire on the earth, to quicken their dead souls. At this typical altar of incense in heaven both these things are accomplished.

12. What do we infer from the "voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and earthquake"?—The commotion produced by the preaching of the Gospel, accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit—voices speak of it—loud sounds of contention for it, or against it, a revolution of opinion like an earthquake, changing the whole current of public thought.

13. What is meant by the "hail and fire mingled with blood"?—We think the incursion of the Goths and Vandals on the Western Roman Empire.

14. How are we to understand the phrase, "The third part of the trees was burnt up"?—It means that these Northern barbarians only overthrew the third part of the Empire.

15. What are we to understand by "the trees"?—The prominent among the people, as judges, and magistrates, and the clergy.

16. What is meant by the "green grass"?—The common people of the Empire.

17. What is meant by the "great mountain burning with fire being cast into the sea"?—We think this means the Vandals, under Geneseric, in A.D. 429, coming down on Africa like "a great mountain falling into the sea," and their slaughter made such a din and hissing as a burning mountain if cast into the sea.

18. How did "the third part of the sea," or the mass of the people (see Note on Chap. vii. 1), "become blood"?—The slaughter which took place in Africa made the nation run with blood.

19. What is meant by the "third part of the creatures" dying?—Frail humanity, whose life was taken away.

20. What is meant by "the third part of the ships being destroyed"?—The invaders destroyed the third part of the shipping of the Roman Empire on the coasts of Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, and other places.

21. Who was this "great star" that fell?—Attila, king of the Huns.

22. What is the meaning of its "burning as it were a lamp"?—He came with fire and sword, scourging the Western Roman Empire.

23. How fall "upon the third part of the rivers and fountains of waters"?—He crossed the river Rhine, and burnt to ashes numbers of cities built on its banks, thus scorching the fountains supplying them with water.

24. How is this star called "Wormwood"?—Because on his way to the Alps, in his victorious career, he left nothing behind him but sorrow and weeping as bitter as "wormwood."

25. How did "the third part of the waters become wormwood"?—The waters were embittered, both the rivers and the fountains, by the quantity of blood shed on their banks.

26. How did "many men die of the waters"?—Because of the bitter sufferings endured on the banks of the waters.

27. What is the meaning of "the third part of the sun being smitten"?—The Roman Emperor, Romulus Augustus, who fell from his lofty dignity in A.D. 476, when the great Roman Empire of the West fell.

28. Who are meant by the "moon and stars"?—The judges and magistrates under the Emperor, whose political horizon was now darkened.

29. What are we to infer from the expression, "the day shone not for a third part of it"?—The political day in the Roman Empire was darkened.

30. What is meant by "the night likewise"?—When the moon darkens by a cloud or an eclipse the night gets darker also; so when the inferior luminaries fell, the political night got still darker.

31. What is meant by the other woes on "the inhabitants of the earth"?—The woes that are yet to come on the Eastern parts of the Roman Empire.

32. Who is this "angel flying through the midst of heaven"?—We think the same as the angel of the third and fifth verses—the Lord Jesus Christ—denouncing the woes that are to come on the Eastern part of the Empire, as already on the Western part.

CHAPTER IX.

THIS chapter contains an account of the sounding of the fifth and sixth trumpets, with the manifestations attending them and the results following.

VERSES 1-12.—*And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth . . . there comes two more woes hereafter.*

These verses contain an account of the fifth trumpet, which indicates the rise and progress of Mahometanism till its power was broken at Bagdad, A.D. 762. The "star" here denotes Mahomet, who, while his father and grandfather were princes in their country, was, immediately after his birth, reduced to a low position, and may be compared to a star that has fallen to the earth. His father died shortly after his birth, as did also his grandfather, and he thus fell from the horizon of royalty to the position of an ordinary man.

"The key of the bottomless pit" means that he assumed the key of religion, as it is represented in the Koran, the Bible of the Mahometans. It states that the angel Gabriel gave to him the key of Paradise, to unlock it as he pleased to his followers. It is here called "the key of the bottomless pit," meaning that his religion is such as would proceed from such a place—full of mystic legends, false doctrine, fanaticism, crime, wickedness, intolerance, and persecution. This is true, as its acts show wherever it has had the power, "He opened the bottomless pit." "The key" is the emblem of his religion, as may be seen on Arabic arches, and it was carried by his followers as such, and it also pointed out their nationality.

"And there arose a smoke out of the bottomless pit, as the smoke of a great furnace." His fiendish religion rose as it were from the pit, darkening the moral atmosphere

with its fumes of false doctrine, and stifling free thought wherever it came. Mahomet was born in Mecca about A.D. 570. He began to propagate his religion about A.D. 612, and took his flight, called the *Hegira*, from Mecca A.D. 622. His religious system did not make much progress in his native land, as there only about 150 embraced it in 12 years. He fled to Medina, where his mission was more successful.

“And the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.” The “sun” would seem to indicate the true religion of the Gospel, and “the air,” the moral atmosphere which hovers around it wherever it prevails. These two were darkened by the fumes of Mahometanism, with its armies, like locusts, darkening the air, and bringing with them false doctrine, and fraud, and pride, and fanaticism, which are as black, in a moral point of view, as the “smoke of a pit.”

“And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth.” That is to say, out of this wicked system, as black as smoke, there issued hordes of Mahometans, like locusts in the air. They present their religion to the people, but behind it are fire and sword if they do not embrace it. In A.D. 629 the Saracens, or Mahometans, first rushed from the desert, and in 636 they came down on Damascus and Jerusalem like a swarm of locusts, and before A.D. 637, a Mahometan mosque was built on the very site of Solomon’s temple. In the ten years from A.D. 636 to 646 they had demolished 3,030 cities, wrecked 4,000 Christian churches, and raised 1,400 mosques, or temples, for their own worship.

“And unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.” As scorpions have power to sting, so they stung with their false doctrine in a spiritual point of view, and with fire and sword in a temporal point of view. Thus they stung like scorpions, and scourged for their idolatry the professing Christians whose religion had become, at this time, so corrupt that God uses this false system to scourge and sting it. It had forgotten its first love, and this is the punishment. Mahometanism was a combination of Judaism and Christianity. It ignored idolatry. It taught the unity of God. It admitted the

Divine mission of Moses and of Christ, but taught that Mahomet was greater than either. It is likely that, owing to these elements of truth in it, it has continued so long and been so prosperous.

The command not to "hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads," means that the Caliph Abubeker, in conformity with the law of the Koran, gave the Mahometans orders, in their expeditions, to spare "the grass, and the fields of corn, and the fruit trees," that they might be food for man and beast. God overrules this that they shall not hurt his own people, high or low, like trees or grass, but only those wanting the "seal of God," or the token of his approval, as the idolaters. And so it was, while the Mahometan hordes, like locusts, scorched, as with the sting of a scorpion, a corrupt Christianity, they were not permitted to touch the Nestorians, the predecessors of the Albigenses, lying away in the Kurdistan mountains. The Nestorians were the progenitors of the Albigenses, who, with the Waldenses, held high the torch of truth in the dark ages when error and superstition stalked over the world like a plague.

"And to them it was given that they should not kill them." "Kill" whom? The men who had not "the seal of God in their foreheads." They were not to kill them, but they were to torment them five months, which they did. For beginning with A.D. 612 (the rise of Mahometanism) to A.D. 762, when the locust swarms of the turbaned Arabs, or Saracens, settled at Bagdad, on the Euphrates, when their power was broken, was five prophetic months, as $30 \times 5 = 150$ years. "War becomes now no longer," says Gibbon, "a passion with the Saracens," and their cause began to decline. A revolution took place in their own ranks by the transference of the Caliphate, or seat of government, to Medinatal Saleni, or the city of peace; but it had at this time overrun Palestine, and Syria, and Egypt, all North Africa, and Spain. It had been used by God as an instrument to punish a corrupt Christianity in the East, worshipping images, and developing into the Greek Church.

“And their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man.” The punishment they inflicted on their enemies was like the “torment of a scorpion.” Scorpions have their stings in their tails, they are different from serpents which have their stings in their mouth. The sting of the former leaves a pungent pain behind. The scorpions are said to be about six inches long, and strike men with this sting, like a gad-fly. How appropriate is this symbol to designate the false doctrine of Mahometanism by the sting of the scorpion.

VERSE 6.—*And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it . . . death shall flee from them.*

This means either that the persecuted would seek death to be out of pain, and could not have their wishes gratified, being kept alive to be tormented; or that the persecutors would “seek death”—eagerly seek it, as it has it in the original Greek—that they might enjoy the indulgences which Mahomet taught they would, if they fell in battle against the Christians. The Koran teaches that in the case of victory they would enjoy earthly honours and license on earth; and in the case of death, sensual indulgences in Paradise. Hence their determination in battle, and their anxiety to “seek death” when it often fled from them, as they were generally victorious.

VERSE 7.—*And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle.*

The Saracens, or Mahometans, are compared to locusts from their swarming together, composed principally of cavalry, as it is said “like unto horses prepared unto battle.” “And on their heads were as it were crowns like gold.” This refers to the turbans which the Mahometans wear, resembling crowns, and in the case of the false prophet himself, tinged with gold, or having stripes of gold running through the fringes or tassels.

“And their faces were as the faces of men.” It means that the Mahometan warriors wore their beard which, together with the turbaned heads, made them more formidable.

VERSE 8.—*And they had their hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.*

They let their hair grow, which hung down their backs as that of women. “And their teeth were as the teeth of lions.” The idea is that they were formidable to their enemies as lions; and as lions grasp their prey with their teeth, they were panting with open jaws to lay hold on theirs.

VERSE 9.—*And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.*

In the ancient wars, when men fought with arrows instead of firearms, the warrior had a breastplate of steel or iron over his heart, which broke the force of the arrow if it struck him in a vital part. So here, to secure them against the weapon of the enemy, they had their “breastplates of iron” to render them invulnerable.

“And the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.” Their cavalry rushing together in swarms, with their swords clanging, together with their other mailed armour, and the tramp of their horses, made a noise like the sound of chariots. Their wings refer to the way their army was spread out as they marched along, namely, like the wings of a bird.

VERSE 10.—*And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails; and their power was to hurt men five months.*

The scorpion differs from the serpent, as it has the sting in its tail, instead of in its mouth, as the latter has. While this Turkish army was numerous like “locusts,” and tormenting like scorpions, yet they appeared captivating with their gorgeous turbans, their grand accoutrements, and the measured tread of their cavalry, and did captivate many to their standard. Notwithstanding this outward gaudy show, they had the sting of false doctrine behind, which still marks the false system of Mahometanism. Their “tails” mean their standards,

which had attached to them a horse's tail. Rallying around this was tantamount to embracing their system, and whoever did so was stung or poisoned by it.

“And their power was to hurt five months.” For the time of the “five months” (see Note on verse 5.)

VERSE II.—*And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.*

Their king appears to be Mahomet, the founder of their system and their leader. He is called the angel of the bottomless pit, for his religion is fiendish and has its origin from such a locality. Two names are here attached to him, “Abaddon” and “Apollyon,” both of which mean the destroyer, as he carries death and destruction in his system wherever it comes, morally and temporally—poison to men's souls and death to their bodies.

Lessons—1. When a nation abuses its privileges, or falls into sin, it is punished with national judgments. So here. The Western part of the Roman Empire and the Church were punished by the Goths, &c., and the Eastern, by the Mahometans. To illustrate this still farther, we may take the case of the Jews, who were punished as a nation for their national sin of rejecting Christ and putting him to death. They said, “His blood be on us and on our children,” and that was fulfilled to the very letter, and is being fulfilled to the present day, in their being scattered as a nation to every land, and in their severe persecutions. And if we sin as a nation, we may also expect national punishment. There is this difference between the punishment of a nation and individuals—a nation, as a nation, has no future existence, and it is punished here, or now; individuals, as individuals, have a future existence, and if they are not punished now, or here, for their sins, God has all eternity to do his work if the sin is not repented of and washed away in the blood of the atonement.

2. We learn the chequered progress of the Church. She is like a ship, sometimes sailing pleasantly in smooth water, after a while tossed with the tempest or caught in a whirlpool. Sin is the cause of all her trials and afflictions;

but when she puts on the robe of penitence, and turns from her sins to God by faith in Christ, she may expect pardon. "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.)

VERSE 12. —*One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.*

The "one woe" means the torment the Mahometans inflicted for "five months," (verses 5-10) under the fifth trumpet. The "two woes" yet to come would seem to refer to the further punishment that is yet to be inflicted on a corrupt Greek Church in the Eastern Roman Empire, and the great Antichrist, or "the Man of Sin," in the West.

VERSES 13-21. —*And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels . . . Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.*

We have, in these verses, the still further progress of Mahometanism, from A.D. 1057 till the overthrow of Constantinople, the last stronghold of apostate Christianity, in A.D. 1453. It rested apparently at Bagdad, on the river Euphrates, where the angels are bound from A.D. 762; and then, in A.D. 1057, commenced anew its career under the form of the Turkish invasion. When the sixth angel sounded, a voice is heard "from the four corners of the golden altar."

1. Whose voice is this? The voice of Christ, who it appears gives orders for the loosing of the four angels of Chap. vii. 3, under whose control he had put the Mahometan armies, to inflict additional punishment on an apostate Church in the East.

2. Where does the voice come from? "The four horns of the golden altar," which means the altar of incense (see Note on chap. viii. 3.) The command given by this voice is—"Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates." They were bound, or restrained,

as also the army under their control, from punishing a degenerate Church for about 300 years. Then apostate Christianity was ripe in the East for the scourge coming, and Mahometanism is let loose again under a new form of invasion, carrying its victorious arms from step to step till Constantinople fell under its power, amidst the groans of the Christians and the shouts of the Moslems or Mahometans.

A question arises here—Why was the work of destruction of an apostate Church suspended for a time, and these angels with their armies bound so long? It may be that an apostate Christianity in the East was not fully ripe for additional persecution, and God kept back his judgments till the appointed time. It might as well be said, Why were not the Israelites permitted to go direct, after they had crossed the Red Sea, to punish idolaters in Canaan, instead of being kept back by wandering forty years in the wilderness? God answers himself, “The iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full.” (Gen. xv. 16.) When a nation is ripe for punishment God has the materials at hand to execute his mission, and consequently the four angels were let loose “which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.” Why is the work ascribed to the angels, they are only the leaders of the armies who do the work? It is said, Solomon built the temple, yet it was only by his orders. While the building of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London is ascribed to Sir Christopher Wren, he was only the architect. It was at Bagdad, on the Euphrates, the angels were bound with their armies after their first invasion, and it is here they arise to execute their second commission in their deeds of slaughter in punishing an apostate Church in the East.

How long were the angels to be loosed? “An hour, and a day, and a month, and a year.” As an hour is the 24th part of a day, so a prophetic hour is the 24th part of a prophetic day or 365 days, = 15 days. “A day” is a prophetic year. “A month” is 30 prophetic years. “A year” is 365 prophetic years. By summing up you have $365 + 30 + 1 = 396$ years and 15 days. But the Turkish or Mahomedan new invasion extended over 396 years, from

A.D. 1057, when they left Bagdad, to A.D. 1453, when they took Constantinople. They left Bagdad on the 12th of February, A.D. 1057, they took Constantinople on the 29th of May, A.D. 1453, which is equal to 396 years and 105 clear days. How do we make up the exact time? As the year is composed of 365 days and about 6 hours, the 6 hours would equal 90 days, which, with the 15 days already mentioned, would make exactly the time the invasion extended over.

The object of the new mission which the four angels were let loose to accomplish. "To slay the third part of men." The angels had already restrained the Saracenic invasion (Chap. vii. 1-3), now they are let loose to inaugurate a new force, that of the Turks, to punish afresh an apostate Church. As the mission of the Goths and Vandals was to destroy the Western Roman Empire and Church for their sins (Chap. viii), so the mission of "the four angels," or the Turkish invasion, is to destroy the third part of the Eastern Roman Empire and Church for a like fault. The fifth trumpet, in the preceding part of this chapter, had an element to torment men; this has an element to slay them. The Turks had to destroy the third part of men in the Eastern Church for their sins, as an apostate Church. And they have ample power to do this, as the number of the army of its horsemen was "two hundred thousand thousand." God employs these agents as his avengers. This number refers, in all probability, to the number of horsemen who went out at different times under this trumpet, from A.D. 1057 till A.D. 1453, against an apostate Christianity. The Turkish army was largely composed of cavalry, as the countries belonging to Turkey were remarkable for their swift steeds. John not only "heard the number," but in the 17th verse he "saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them," &c. The breastplates glittered and shone like "fire," and like "jacinth," which is a precious stone of peculiar brilliancy, and like "brimstone," which has a light of a very bright colour.

"And the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions, and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone." The heads of the horses were fierce and formidable, like lions eager for their prey. They had been

taught to rush into battle, and, like Job's war-horse, they could smell the battle afar off. The "fire and smoke and brimstone" out of their mouths represent the evil principles which characterised Mahometanism. John is speaking in vision (verse 17), and he describes the horses in this fierce attitude, as resembling the system which they were used for propagating, for while they are to destroy a corrupt Christianity they are to propagate Islamism, or the religion of Mahomet. The "fire" is the emblem of persecution; "smoke," the emblem of blinding error; and "brimstone," that of foul immorality, polluting the moral atmosphere wherever it makes its way.

VERSE 18.—*By these three was the third part of men killed.*

We think "the third part" refers to the destruction which these Turkish warriors made in the Eastern Church. The third part of the Roman Empire had been destroyed in the West by the Goths and Vandals, &c., and an apostate Church had there been punished severely for its sins, and now the same calamities are to befall the Eastern Roman Empire by the Mahometans, only this latter is of a severer type, for the "third part of men" are killed, either literally by their persecution, or morally by their soul-destroying doctrines.

VERSE 19. —*For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails.*

The power for evil of Mahometanism lay largely in its cavalry, and is so represented here, for the "mouth" would seem to refer to the reigning of the horses, whose swiftness led to such victories. Not only does it lie in their mouth, but "in their tails," for the tail of the horse was the ensign of the Turkish standard, and led on to victory and the propagation of the Mahometan religion. Wherever the standard or the colours of a nation are planted in war it is the rallying point to victory. So here. It is said that one of the Turkish chiefs having lost his standard, cut off his horse's tail, erected it on a pole, and made it the rallying point around which all his army was to gather to victory.

Further, "their tails were like unto serpents do hurt." The tail, surmounted on a pole, was not very unlike the brazen serpent erected by Moses in the wilderness. In both cases the people gathered round them; but the one was to cure, the other was to kill or "hurt." But it is said of the tails, that they "had heads," that is, that they had the crescent, as we think, over them, as the crown surmounting the harp in the figure of Ireland, and as we see in the emblem of the Mahometan standard. And as the latter was the standard of the Turkish army, its presence was the sign of deadly destruction wherever it appeared.

VERSE 20.—*And the rest of the men which were not killed nor walk.*

"The rest of the men" who survived the destruction, and were not killed with the "third part," "yet repented not of the works of their hands," that is, notwithstanding the destruction of their brethren, did not give over their idolatry. They still clung to their images and superstitions. "The devils" mean demons, or canonized saints, or angels, which last two personages are still objects of veneration by the Romish Church. Pope Pius IV., reigning Pontiff at the close of the Council of Trent, said "that the saints reigning with Christ are to be worshipped and invoked, that they offer prayer to God for us, and that their relics are to be worshipped." The "idols of gold and silver and brass," &c., mean the images made to represent Christ and the Virgin Mary, and the other saints. And in the creed of the same Pope Pius it is said they are to be retained, and that the honour and worship due to them are to be discharged. Notwithstanding the persecutions to which the Eastern Roman Empire was subjected by the Turks, as a punishment for their idolatry and apostasy from the faith of primitive Christianity, they still continued the devoted slaves of their idolatry and superstition. We may learn from this that no amount of persecution will drive a man from his idols of sin, or false religion, but only the grace of God and the quickening influence of the Holy Spirit. So it has been in all ages and in all countries, till

the Gospel brings every thought into obedience to Christ. Take, for example, the case of John Bunyan, who was twice mercifully preserved from drowning, and who, when called to stand sentinel at the siege of Leicester in 1645, had his life again spared, as a comrade taking his place was shot through the head by a musket ball. But all did not change him, till the grace of God arrested him in his downward career. Take again the case of Captain Haldane to illustrate this point. When a battle rages, and the deck of his ship is swept by a broadside from the enemy, which made fearful carnage of the bodies of his men, he orders a new company of men up to take their place. The men are seized with trepidation at seeing the mangled remains of their comrades. He swears a dreadful oath, reviling them for their cowardice, when a pious Highlander touched his hat in respect, and, with great politeness, says, "Captain, I believe that God hears prayer, and if that were answered where would we all be now?" After the battle—for he was still as hardened as ever, notwithstanding the carnage—he begins to reflect on his conduct and the words of the pious Highlander; and, by the grace and Spirit of God, he was led to repentance; and that Captain (James) Haldane afterwards became an eminent minister in Edinburgh, and was the means of effecting a vast amount of good in his day and generation. Providences or trials, of themselves, will never reform the heart without the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

"Neither repented they of their murders . . . thefts." Their murders mean their slaughter of the saints, as the persecution of the Waldenses and Albigenses, in A.D. 1213, under Pope Innocent III.; the cruelties of the Duke of Alva in the Low Countries, Holland and Belgium, in A.D. 1556; the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day in France, in A.D. 1572; the Irish massacre in A.D. 1641, &c.; and the terrible scenes of the Inquisition, of which they did not repent.

"Nor of their sorceries." These mean, we think, the whole mystery of the veneration of relics, and rosaries, and crucifixes, &c., to which they still cling.

"Nor of their fornication." This immorality is a violation of the seventh commandment, and was one of those

sins of the early professing Christian Church which she did not repent of, and which is here charged against her.

"Nor of their thefts." These are a violation of the eighth commandment. The Romish Church claims what does not belong to her, and thinks that all the world should be hers. For example, the Pope gave to Spain and Portugal, years ago, the whole heathen world, and that usurped power has never been revoked. He gave to Henry II. the King of England, in A.D. 1155, Ireland as an appendage to the British crown. Surely this was claiming and taking what was not his own, and conferring it upon others.

We learn from this chapter that God raises up one persecuting power to punish another—the Turks, to punish an apostate Greek Christianity of Romish type. "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER IX.

1. Who is this star introduced in the first verse?—We think Mahomet.
2. How fall from heaven?—From a high position, as his father and grandfather were princes in their country. By his father's early death he is reduced to a low position.
3. What is meant by "the key of the bottomless pit"?—The key of religion, as it is represented in the Koran.
4. How could the key of religion be called "the key of the bottomless pit"?—Meaning that it is such a religion as would proceed from such a place, full of false doctrine, fanaticism, crime, and persecution.
5. What is meant by his "opening the bottomless pit"?—The key is the emblem of his religion, and it opened the way to such false doctrine and intolerance as would proceed from the bottomless pit.
6. What is meant by the "smoke out of the pit"?—His fiendish religion rises from the pit of error, like "smoke," darkening the moral atmosphere wherever it came.
7. How like "a great furnace"?—It made great havoc wherever it went, and its conquests were immense.
8. What is understood by "the sun and the air being darkened by reason of it"?—The "sun" would appear to be true religion, and the

"air," the moral atmosphere which hovers around true religion wherever it prevails. These two were darkened by the fumes of Mahometanism.

9. What is meant by "locusts coming out of the smoke"?—Its armies were numerous, like locusts, carrying with them the stifling fumes of false religion.

10. How have they power as "scorpions"?—To sting with their false doctrine in a religious point of view, and with their swords in a temporal point of view.

11. What is meant by the expression, "not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, nor any tree"?—God's people, high or low, like trees or grass; and so the Nestorians and Albigenes were spared when others were destroyed.

12. Who are "the men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads"?—The idolaters.

13. Why not kill them?—The mission of the Mahometans was to sting or punish a corrupt Christianity in the Eastern Roman Empire.

14. What is meant by their being tormented five months?—Five prophetic months. The rise of Mahometanism took place in A.D. 612, and from that till A.D. 762, when the Mahometan or Saracenic army settled in Bagdad, when it had largely spent its force in war and punishing a corrupt Christianity developing into the Greek Church, was five prophetic months, $30 \times 5 = 150$ years. When 30, the number of days in the Jewish month, is multiplied by 5, it makes 150.

15. How is it that "men shall seek death and shall not find it"?—First, it either refers to the conquered, that they sought death to be freed from the pains inflicted on them; or to the conquerors, as Mahomet taught his followers that they could get every kind of indulgence beyond the grave, if they died fighting against Christians.

16. How could they "not find it"?—In the case of the conquered, often they could not get their wishes gratified, being kept alive to be tormented; and, in the case of the conquerors, they were generally victorious, and death fled from them.

17. What is meant by "the shapes of the locusts"?—It means the forms the Saracenic or Mahometan armies assumed, like swarms of locusts. These invaders were composed largely of cavalry, rushing into the battle.

18. What were these "crowns" they carried on their "heads"?—These were the turbans, which were in many cases fringed, or tasseled with gold.

19. What is the meaning of the expression, "Their faces were as the faces of men"?—Though their uniform was so striking, the beards of the horsemen, which they wore, indicated that they were men after all.

20. What is meant by their having "hair as the hair of women"?—They let their hair grow like women.

21. How "were their teeth as the teeth of lions"?—The idea is

that they were formidable to their enemies, and tore them, as a lion would tear his prey with his teeth.

22. What is meant by the "breastplates, as of iron"?—As in the ancient wars, when men fought with bows and arrows, they had breastplates of steel to defend them against the arrows; so here

23. What is understood by the "sound of their wings as of chariots"?—Their wings mean the outspreading of their armies, and the sound of them, rushing to the battle, was like the sound of chariots with the rumbling wheels. The prancing of their horses and the clanging of their swords made a dreadful noise.

24. What is the meaning of their having "tails like the tails of scorpions," and "stings in their tails"?—Their "tails" mean their standards, and whoever joined their standards was stung by the false doctrine of Mahometanism, and this was as deadly, in a spiritual point of view, as the sting of a scorpion in a temporal point of view.

25. What is meant by "their power to hurt men five months"?—Five prophetic months. (See answer to Question 13.)

26. Who is the "king they had over them"?—Mahomet.

27. Why is he called "the angel of the bottomless pit"?—Because his religion is fiendish, as if it arose from such a locality.

28. What is the meaning of "Abaddon," and "Apollyon"?—Both mean the destroyer, as his system ruins souls and leads to the destruction of many bodies.

29. What is the "one woe" that "is past"?—The torment of Mahometanism inflicted for "five months" on the Eastern Church.

30. What is meant by the "two woes more"?—They appear to refer to a further punishment yet to be inflicted on the same Church, under the 6th trumpet, for her apostasy; and on the great Antichrist, or the Man of Sin, in the West, under the 7th trumpet.

31. Whose voice is this that comes from "the golden altar"?—The voice of Christ.

32. What is meant by "the golden altar"?—The altar of incense. (See answer to Question 6, Chap. viii., or Note on Chap. viii. 3.)

33. Who are "the four angels bound in the great river Euphrates"?—The tempest-restraining angels (see Note on Chap. vii. 1), who control the Turkish army.

34. What is meant by "an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year," the time during which the angels are to be let loose?—It means 396 years, from the Turks left Bagdad, when the angels were loosed, A.D. 1057, till they took Constantinople in A.D. 1453.

35. What was the object of the mission of these angels?—To "slay" the third part of the Eastern Roman Empire, and punish a corrupt Church for their sins, as happened already to the Western Roman Empire and Church for their sins.

36. What is meant by "breastplates of fire," &c.?—Breastplates shining like fire, and glittering like "jacinth," a brilliant precious

stone, and shining under the lurid sun of the East like "brimstone," which burns with a very bright light.

37. How were "the heads of the horses like the heads of lions"?—They were fierce and formidable, like those of lions.

38. How "out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone"?—John is speaking in vision, and pictures even the horses, as betraying the fierceness of the system they are used to propagate. They carry with them destruction wherever they go—the "fire" is the emblem of persecution; the "smoke," the emblem of blinding error; and the "brimstone," the emblem of foul immorality.

39. What is meant by "the third part of men being killed"?—Killed literally by the sword, or ruined morally by the soul-destroying doctrines.

40. How was "their power in their mouth and in their tails"?—The power of Mahometanism lay, to a great extent, in the "mouth" of their cavalry horses, who could be reined easily with bit and bridle to enter the war, and to fly swiftly unto victory. And as the "tail" of the horse was the ensign of the Turkish standard, it stimulated them to follow their standard, and was the means of gaining many a conquest.

41. How were "their tails like unto serpents"?—The "tail," or ensign, erected on a pole, was not very unlike the form of the brazen serpent set up by Moses in the wilderness. Or, it may be that the "tails," with the crescent surmounted on them, had a serpentine form.

42. What is the meaning of the tails having heads?—The crescent surmounted on them, which was the Turkish standard.

43. How did they "hurt" with them?—As the standards were the rallying point in victory, they hurted many an enemy by them.

44. Who are meant by "the rest of the men"?—The men who survived the Mahometan persecutions did not repent of their idolatry, they still clung to their images and superstitions.

45. What is meant by the worship of "devils and idols of gold," &c.?—The devils mean demons, or evil spirits; and images mean pictures, which they set up to worship.

CHAPTER X.

THIS chapter gives us an account of another vision, or another part of the general vision, which John saw, and introduces to us a "little book" in the hand of a mighty angel. This "little book" contains the rise and progress of Romanism, from the fall of the Western Empire in A.D. 476, till the beginning of the 16th century, or the rise of the Reformation.

As between the 6th and 7th seals there was a pause for the sealing of the tribes, so here there is an interlude between the 6th and 7th trumpets for a sketch of the rise and progress of the "Man of Sin," who was conceived when the Western Empire fell. During the infliction of the 5th and 6th woe trumpets on the Eastern Empire, to punish it for a corrupt Christianity, the Papacy is rising and progressing in the West. The fifth trumpet, or first woe trumpet, was sounded, introducing the plague of locusts, or the Saracens. The sixth trumpet, or second woe trumpet, announced the plague of the horsemen, or Turks, on the Eastern Empire. And as the seventh trumpet, or third woe trumpet, is to introduce the woe on the Papacy in the West, it is necessary that the history of that system should be taken up. This the "little book" does.

VERSES I-II.—*And I saw another mighty angel tongues, and kings.*

I.—We have a description here of this "mighty angel."

1. Who he is. He is called a "mighty angel," as having power over the sea and the earth, thus placing his feet on them in authority. He is called "another," in contrast to the "strong angel" (Chap. v. 2), who asks, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals

thereof?" The one is a "strong angel," meaning one of the common angels (see explanation of the passage); the other is a "mighty angel," the Angel of the Covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is King of kings and Lord of lords.

2. How he is clothed. "With a cloud." As at Sinai, he is veiled with a cloud, and has a trumpet to announce his will in the Ten Commandments to Moses; so here, as he is to make known the mystery of the "little book," he appears clothed with a cloud also. And with "a rainbow upon his head." This has reference to the covenant of safety made with Noah after the flood; and as the woe is to be poured out on the system which the "little book" discloses, the rainbow on his head is the token of safety, that his true Church is safe whatever may befall her enemies.

3. What he is like. "And his face was as it were the sun." How bright is the sun when he is dazzling in his glory? And what a fit emblem to paint the likeness of the Sun of Righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the "brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person." "And his feet as pillars of fire." This is to represent his great strength; and the idea of "fire" represents his grandeur and beauty. The government of the world is on his shoulder (Is. ix. 6), and his feet must be as pillars to support the weight. "His throne is established in righteousness."

4. What he holds. "A little book open." Though this "little book" gives an account of the rise and progress of the great Antichrist, the angel, Jehovah, is represented as holding it in his hand, showing that he has the control of all the affairs in his kingdom. Not only does he wield the government of the universe, but he controls all its affairs. Though Antichrist may rise and reign, at the same time it has its limits, and can go no further than it gets permission. He holds it "in his hand" in the way of restraint. But the "little book" is "open." This is in contrast to the "sealed book," showing that all may read it, and all may see it, that it is the system that is to be destroyed.

5. Where he stands. "On the sea and on the earth." This teaches us that earth and sea are his footstool, for

they are his. Though he came down from heaven he makes the land and sea minister to him. He was in the former verse "clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon his head," showing that the sky ministers to him; now he shows that the earth and sea are his as well as the heavens. Well may he do this, for he made all things—"All things were made by him." (John iii. 3.)

6. The oath he takes. It is *far reaching*. The sound of it is heard through the whole world, for the angel has one foot "upon the sea, and another on the earth." And it is so "loud" that it is heard even in heaven, for "the seven thunders" uttered their voices, in all probability to call attention to it there. Whatever were the words of the "seven thunders" it seems they are not part of the vision to be revealed, for John is not allowed to write them, but to seal them up, they are so solemn. It is as when "a lion roareth." This indicates danger. "The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" (Amos iii. 8.) God speaks or swears, let the nations stand in awe! The question arises—Why are they sealed up? Perhaps, according to Dean Alford's view, "to produce Godly fear—that the arrows of God's quiver are not exhausted." Why called "*seven thunders*"? Perhaps, like the seven Churches, and seven spirits, and seven candlesticks, and seven seals, and seven angels, a term of perfection, as giving perfect warning of the rise and progress of the "Man of Sin," and the judgment that is to be poured out on him. Whose is the voice warning John not to write, but to seal up what the "seven thunders" uttered? Is it the same as the "loud voice"? We think not. The "loud voice," as we have seen, is the voice of Christ. This voice must be that of the Holy Spirit, by whom holy men spake (2 Peter i. 21); and as those words were to be sealed up, the Holy Spirit prohibits him from writing them.

7. The mode of swearing. It is not by "kissing the book," but by lifting up his hand. (See, for example, Gen. xiv. 22; Dan. xii. 7.) He takes God to witness that it is true, as he swears "by him that liveth for ever and ever." The modern form of kissing the book in swearing has no warrant from Scripture, and is of heathen

origin. We have an account of kissing the calves (Hosea xiii. 2), but no account of kissing the book.

8. The matter of the oath. "That there should be time no longer." Not that time will then end, but that it is not yet time to write, or reveal the judgments of which the seven thunders gave warning, namely, the plagues upon Antichrist, under the seventh trumpet. Before his judgments are to be revealed, his rise and progress must be described, and his persecutions of the "two witnesses" in the 11th chapter. The phrase—"that there should be time no longer," literally means, from the original Greek, "that the time shall not be yet to write these." The construction appears to be a connexion of the end of the 4th verse, with the end of the 6th, leaving the 5th, and almost the 6th verse elliptical, and then it would run thus:—"Write them not, because the time has not yet come" to do so; "but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel" the time shall be to write them. By this construction we have the time of writing in the end of the 6th verse, connected with the time of the revelation of the writing in the 7th verse. This fixes a definite period for the revelation of the writing, namely, "the days of the voice of the seventh angel."

A question arises here—What is the meaning of the phrase, "the mystery of God should be finished." The meaning seems to be, that the great Antichrist having completed his reign and progress, is now ripe for his judgments,—about the beginning of the Reformation. It does not mean that the system, which is a "mystery" and a riddle to the world, shall have then "finished" its course, but only thoroughly developed and hardened in sin for the beginning of the end, when the plague of the 7th thunder would be poured out. It is called "the mystery of God," in that God has kept John from revealing its judgments till its rise and progress and hardening in crime would have been beyond dispute; in that the "souls under the altar" (Chap. vi. 9), should have been kept so long in waiting for its destruction—the "little season" (Chap. vi. 11); in that it is a wonder and a mystery to many that God permits it so long to persecute his saints, and usurp such authority in the earth. "As he hath

declared to his servants the prophets." The final destruction and overthrow of Antichrist was one great theme of the prophets, when the Gospel would have free course and be glorified, and when the Lord Jesus Christ would be rightful King in his own kingdom. Now that kingdom is largely usurped by the great Antichrist, but when it shall have been swept away by the plague or judgment of the seventh trumpet, then shall be heard reverberating throughout the wide world—"Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen!"

Daniel speaks of the "time, times, and the dividing of time" (vii. 25); John of "a time, times, and half-a-time." (Chap. xii. 14.) A time is regarded in prophecy as a year, times, two years, and half-a-time, or the dividing of time, half a year. These equal 42 months, and at the Jewish reckoning of 30 days to the month=1,260 days, or $3\frac{1}{2}$ prophetic years. This is regarded by most commentators as the time the great Antichrist is to continue. Now if we take the starting point for the development of Antichrist or the "Man of Sin" at A.D. 755, when the Pope became a "little horn," or assumed temporal power, and add 1,260 years, it brings us to A.D. 2015, when we may expect his overthrow. The judgment of the 7th trumpet begins, we think, at the Reformation, and ends with the overthrow of this system. Jeremiah speaks of the fall of Babylon (li. 7, 8), and as most commentators identify Babylon with Rome, and as the apostle Peter himself would appear to do the same (1 Pet. v. 13), its destruction is declared as inevitable by both prophets and apostles.

II.—We have an account of the "little book."

1. Why is it called a "little book"? Because it contains only a part of the revelation of John's vision—namely, the conception and rise and progress of the "Man of Sin" from the 5th century, or the fall of the Western Roman Empire, to the end of the system in A.D. 2015. The history of the "little book" is equivalent to the "little season" of Chap. vi. 11., while the souls were kept resting, or the period of the Papal system. The "sealed book" of the fifth chapter contained the whole

history of the revelation, this book only a part of it, and hence the phrase, "the little book."

2. Why does John make application to the angel to get it? John is startled with curiosity as to the contents of the "little book." It is so pregnant with mystery as to the contents of a certain system that it would seem he wants to master them, and hence the application, "Give me the little book." The angel complies with John's request, and says, "Take it, and eat it up." The meaning is, digest it thoroughly. It contains matters of momentous importance to the Church of which you are the messenger, and whose history you are to write. Weigh the contents well, for the Church will have many a conflict with the subject which it contains. The reference is likely to Jeremiah xv. 16, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them;" but especially to Ezek. iii. 1-3, where the prophet is commanded to "eat" the roll, meaning that the prophet was to understand and thoroughly digest it before he made it known to others. So here; John should well understand the message and meditate on its contents before he made it known. This should be a lesson to ministers and Sabbath School teachers, that they should well understand the Word themselves, and apply it experimentally to their own souls, before they make it known to others.

III.—The effect it produces.

1. It was in John's "mouth sweet as honey." The study of the Word of God is sweet; and prophecy is a delightful theme of contemplation. New knowledge is sweet to acquire. Even the child at school, when drinking in new knowledge, is pleased and quiet. It was pleasant to Ezekiel, and it is pleasant here to John, "It was in my mouth sweet as honey."

2. "It made his belly bitter." So in Ezek. iii. 14; after eating the roll "he went in bitterness, in the heat of his spirit." The meaning then seems to be, that while John was delighted with the new information, he was grieved that the contents of this book, which at first appeared so pleasant, were to be the development of a system which was to prove so persecuting, and to be the

death of so many of the saints of God. But, however bitter its contents, and trying to John to make them known, as God's messenger, he must discharge his duty. The Papal system may have appeared plausible at first, but it turned out bitter in the end.

IV.—The work still to be done.

"He must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." Though John is soon to finish his earthly course after this—as he left Patmos about A.D. 95—and now bowed down with the weight of years, yet there is still work for him to do. He is yet to proclaim this message about the rise and progress of the "Man of Sin," that many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings may hear that it is a system which is to be "consumed with the Spirit of God's mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of his coming," and all must see its rise and development before God's judgments are to be poured out on it.

We learn some lessons here :—

1. That it is right to study prophecy, and to ascertain what is the mind of God, however calamitous the consequences may be.
2. The respect John paid to the angel, who was no other than the Jehovah-Angel, the Lord Jesus Christ, when he takes the book at his request, and eats it up. We, acting on John's principle, should do as we are bid, and take from God's hand whatever is sweet or bitter, knowing that he understands what is best for us. He will make all things work together for good to his people in the end, and to the remainder of the wrath of his enemies he will set restraining bounds.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER X.

1. Who is this "mighty angel"?—We believe he is the Angel of the Covenant, the Jehovah-Angel.
2. What does the "rainbow upon his head" signify?—That as the world is safe from the destruction of a flood, by the appearance of a rainbow, so Christ's people are safe whatever judgments may be poured out on his enemies.

3. What is meant by "his feet as pillars of fire"?—The "pillars" represent his great strength; and the "fire" represents his grandeur and beauty.

4. What does the "little book" signify?—The rise and progress of the great Antichrist.

5. What is the meaning of his holding it in his hand?—That he has the control of all its movements in his own power.

6. Why is it represented as "open," when the sealed book was closed?—That all may read it.

7. What is meant by "his right foot upon the sea and his left foot on the earth"?—That the sea and earth are his footstool, and that the sound of his voice, when he "roareth," may be heard through the whole world.

8. What is meant by the seven thunders?—Perhaps, like the seven Spirits a term of perfection, as giving perfect warning of the rise and progress of Antichrist, and the judgment that is to be poured out upon the system.

9. Why is the utterance of the seven thunders sealed, while the book is allowed to be open?—Likely to produce godly fear, and that the arrows of God's quiver are not yet exhausted.

10. Whose is this second voice from heaven, commanding John to seal up the sayings of the seven thunders?—We think, not the voice of the mighty Angel, but that of the Holy Spirit, by whom "holy men spake" (2 Peter i. 21).

11. What mode of swearing did the Angel adopt?—Lifting up the hand, which is the Scriptural mode (Gen. xiv. 22).

12. What is the meaning of "time" being "no longer"?—That the time shall not be yet to write the judgments upon Antichrist, under the seventh trumpet.

13. What is meant by "the mystery of God being finished"?—The meaning seems to be, that the great Antichrist, having completed his rise and progress, is now ripe for his judgments.

14. Why called "the mystery of God"?—Because Antichrist is a mystery and a riddle to the world; but it is called "the mystery of God," in that God has kept John from revealing its judgments till its rise and development cannot be mistaken.

15. Why called a "little book"?—Because it contains only a part of the revelation of John's vision—the rise and progress of Antichrist, or the "Man of Sin."

16. Why does John ask the little book from the Angel?—Because John is startled with curiosity as to its contents, and he would like to know more about them, as the Church will have many a conflict with the subject which it contains.

17. Why is John commanded to "eat" it?—That John should well understand its contents.

18. How is it in his "mouth sweet as honey"?—The study of the Word of God was sweet to John, and should be so to us.

19. How did it make his "belly bitter"?—He was grieved that its contents should prove so persecuting to the Church.

CHAPTER XI.

THIS chapter is an introduction to the persecuting tendency of Antichrist, which is continued to the 20th chapter. It describes the "rod," or measuring line, of the Apostle; the "two witnesses"; the sounding of the 7th trumpet, or the 3rd woe trumpet; the ushering in of Christ's kingdom; the thanksgiving of the elders; and the opening of the temple in heaven.

VERSES 1-19.—*And there was given me a reed like unto a rod . . . and an earthquake, and great hail.*

Verses 1 and 2 include the measuring line, and what it is to measure and what it was not to measure; also the time that the "holy city" is to be "trodden under foot."

I.—The measuring line.

This means, we think, Church discipline. It is called a "reed," or a "rod," emblematic of the shepherd's crook with which he guides and corrects the flock, and especially figurative of the rod or sceptre of King Messiah (Psa. ii. 9) by which he brings his people in subjection to himself. Thus discipline is designed—(1) For the good of the individual (1 Cor. v. 3-5), and it had the desired effect, as the person was improved by it; for we find such a one humbled and penitent, and received back again into the Church (2 Cor. ii. 6-8). This teaches us that Church discipline is a means of grace, as well as other Gospel ordinances. (2) For the good of the Church. By this means the Church is purified and her ordinances are respected. "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs." As the storms of winter purify the air and free it from miasma and noxious vapours, so Church discipline, properly administered, purifies the moral atmosphere and leaves a healthy ecclesiastical body behind.

II.—What it measures.

1. "The temple of God," or the Church. In Ezek. xliii. 10. 11. it is compared to a garden enclosed—"Show them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof," &c. The Church is not to be modelled after the whims and caprices of men, as they think proper, nor according to the tastes and standard of society, but after the laws and pattern as laid down in the Word of God.

(1.) It must have a Head. This is the Lord Jesus Christ. No prince, no potentate, no supreme Pontiff at Rome, is fit to superintend the Church and control its affairs. This is reserved for the Lord Jesus Christ, its only King and Head (Ephes. i. 21; v. 23). In all things he must "have the pre-eminence" (Col. i. 18). And surely he will not allow his body, which is his Church, to be ruled by an inferior, or give that glory which he claims as his prerogative to another (Isa. xlii. 8). (2.) It must have officers. When Christ ascended on high (Ephes. iv. 11) he did not leave the appointment of the officers of his Church to men to be selected at random. He thinks too much of his mystical body to allow her to be thus treated. No; he gives her men of his own appointment, and thus stretches out the line, or the measuring "rod," over her, for her good and his own glory. "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers," &c. The people who are to be edified by them, and among whom they are to break the bread of life, have the best right to choose them, and the Head of the Church gives them this privilege, as we learn from the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Peter is addressing the 120 disciples in the "upper room," and, when he had concluded, they proceeded to select a successor to Judas Iscariot. The personal pronoun "they," of the 23rd verse, evidently refers to the 120 of the 15th verse, and to them it belongs to make the appointment, which they did, by casting their lots, "and the lot fell upon Matthias." And here the measuring line was stretched out over the appointment of an officer to the Church.

The officers must be ordained by the Apostles, or now

by a Presbytery (Acts xiii. 3; 1 Tim. iv. 14). Every instance of ordination recorded in the New Testament, save that of the disciples by Christ (Mark iii. 14), is by a plurality of Apostles, or Presbyters; and while some quote Paul's appointing of Titus to "ordain elders in every city," there is no record of his having done so. Besides, the word "ordain," in the Authorised Version, is not the word for ordination in Acts. xiii. 3; xiv. 23; or in 1 Tim. iv. 14, but simply to appoint and not ordain. Again, the Revised Version does not use the word "ordain," but "appoint." Hence Titus, as a single individual, had no right to ordain. The immorality of the Cretians, and their unsoundness in the faith, made it necessary that one with the training of Titus, under Paul, should be delegated to assist in the selection of men with suitable gifts and graces for the eldership. But it will be said, Did not Paul ordain Timothy "by the putting on of his hands"? (2 Tim. i. 6.) If this was an act of ordination, then it could only be his hands in connexion with the Presbytery, for his ordination is recorded already (1 Tim. iv. 14), and surely 1st Timothy is before 2nd Timothy. But it was not an act of ordination at all, but likely some gift conferred "by the putting on" of the Apostle's hands, for he could stir up a grace but not an office, which is conferred by ordination.

Even in the case of the Deacons, their ordination was by a plurality. The Apostles, when they had prayed, "laid their hands on them (Acts vi. 6).

2. The altar. This, we think, refers to the doctrine and worship of the Church. Every kind of doctrine and worship is not to be imported into it. It knows nothing of the many theories, now under cover of doctrine and worship, leavening the Church, and many "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Paul says (Gal. i. 8), "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." The measuring line measures the doctrines and forms of worship that are to be propounded and observed at the altar, or in the sanctuary—as the atonement, reconciling an offended God to an offending people, through the merits of a crucified

Redeemer—the Divinity and Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ—the person and work of the Holy Ghost—the love of God to sinners, in sending “his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”—the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and his all-prevailing intercession—the resurrection of all at the general judgment—the eternal punishment of the wicked, and the eternal happiness of the righteous—man’s sin by the fall and his actual transgression, and pardon for the penitent through the Lord Jesus Christ, “who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” These are some of the leading doctrines (not forgetting the Trinity, or three persons in one God-head) which must be propounded at the altar, and must be strictly guarded by the measuring line of God’s Word. Also, no form of worship is to be introduced which the Word of God does not warrant. “If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. viii. 20). The Church is to be fenced with the measuring line of sound doctrine as a garden enclosed. Indeed Christ calls his Church his vineyard (Matt. xxi. 33) where it has a hedge about it, and he will not allow its sacred enclosures to be marred by false teachers, or false doctrine, or false forms of worship. The Church has no right to decree ceremonies and introduce this form or that in worship. The Romish theory is that the Church may introduce what is not forbidden, whereas Christ says to his Apostles (Matt. xxviii. 19), “Go . . . and teach . . . whatsoever I have *commanded* you.”

3. The worshippers. “And them that worship therein.” All are not equally privileged. The sealing ordinances—Baptism and the Lord’s Supper—must be withheld from the drunkard, and the swearer, and the liar, and the idolater, and the Sabbath-breaker; also from those who are violators of the second table of the Law, while they continue thus. The measuring line of discipline must be applied to all such, till they repent of their sins and reform their lives, for “it is not meet to take the children’s bread and cast it to dogs (Matt. xv. 26). The power of the keys, or the discipline invested in the officers of the Church, is described (Matt. xviii. 15-18)

as binding and loosing, and supplies the measuring rod that is to be applied to offenders, either suspending them from the sealing ordinances, or restoring them on their repentance. This discipline is a means of grace, and when it is neglected, an important part of the means of grace is set aside; and consequently the Church cannot be in such a healthy state as it ought. Let us take a case as an illustration. A man, for example, has been at the Lord's Supper. During the interval between one communion and another he has fallen into the sin of drunkenness, or uncleanness, and has brought dishonour on religion before the world, and on the church with which he is connected. The communion comes round again, and he makes application to be admitted. Surely "it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs;" and the officers of the Church, according to Christ's command, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven," exclude him, or "bind" him with the cords of discipline for his reformation; and what they do on earth is ratified in heaven, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." They do it as a means of grace, and it becomes so; for in many instances the man is led to repentance, as that one excommunicated, or put under the ban of discipline, by Paul, to whom we have referred already,—and the officers then remove the ban—"loose" him, and admit him again to the fellowship and communion of the Church; and what they "loose on earth is loosed in heaven."

III.—What is not to be measured.

"But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not." Why? It made no profession of religion, and consequently cannot have the measuring "rod" of discipline applied to it. When men make no profession of religion, or stay without the pale of the Church, the officers of the Church cannot deal with them in the way of discipline. The child who stays away from school cannot be subjected to the wholesome discipline of the school, so with men who refuse to connect themselves with the Christian congregation.

"It is to be given to the Gentiles." As the Gentiles were out of the pale of the Jewish Church, and could not be subjected to its discipline; so the heathen nations still, and all living out of the pale of the Christian Church, cannot be subjected to its wholesome discipline. But they have still the "court without the temple." That is, they can avail themselves of the preaching of the Gospel, and the ordinary means of grace. "The court without the temple," we consider, refers to the outer court of Solomon's temple, where the proselytes of the gate, or the converts to Judaism from the Gentiles, might worship at the Feasts, but might not enjoy the privileges of the Jews, by partaking of the Feasts. So those refusing to connect themselves with the Christian Church have the privilege of hearing the Gospel, but at the same time they can act without any restraint, and exempt themselves from the measuring "rod" of Christian discipline by the officers of the Church. Hence we learn that the "rod" has its limits—one part may be measured, and the other may not.

IV.—The time that the "holy city" is to be trodden under foot—"forty and two months."

The "holy city" would seem to imply the invisible Church, composed of all the members of Christ's mystical body, or all true believers. It is called "holy," as composed of holy people, and "city," because "set on a hill which cannot be hid" (Matt. v. 14). The citizens are "epistles of Christ, known and read of all men" (2 Cor. iii. 2, 3). They "let their light so shine before men that they may see their good works and glorify their Father who is in heaven."

The "forty and two months" would seem to mean the period from A.D. 755, when the Pope became a little horn, or assumed temporal power, to A.D. 2015, the time that the great Antichrist, or the "Man of Sin," is to continue. Forty and two months are $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, equivalent to Daniel's "time, and times, and the dividing of time" (Daniel vii. 25). And as the Jews calculated their months by 30 days in each, $42 \times 30 = 1260$ days, or prophetic years, a day taken for a year. Taking A.D. 755, as the now largely

developed child of Antichrist, and adding 1260, as the time of its continuance, we arrive at the date when the true Church is to be emancipated from the "Man of Sin," A.D. 2015. These "forty and two months," or 1260 prophetic years, complete the time that this system is to persecute the true Church. Referring again to Daniel's "time, and times, and the dividing of time," we shall see that it tallies with the 42 months of the text. "A time" means a year, "times" mean two years, and the "dividing of time," or half a time, means half a year, which are equivalent to 42 months. This is calculating on what is called "the year-day theory," a prophetic day taken for a year.

It is well that the time of persecution is limited, and that God has said, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise him; the remainder of wrath he shall restrain. (Psa. lxxvi. 10.)

VERSES 3, 4.—*And I will give power unto my two witnesses standing before the God of the earth.*

1. The "two witnesses" mean the Waldenses and Albigenses. They were persecuted for years by the power of the Romish system. The Waldenses and Albigenses resided, one in the Western Church, and the other in the Eastern. When the Western Empire was overthrown, under the 4th trumpet, the seat of empire was transferred to Constantinople. And when Mahometanism spread in the East, under the 5th and 6th trumpets, the "Man of Sin" was not idle in the West. And during his rise and progress, sketched in the "little book," the Waldenses held high the lamp of the truth, as a candlestick amidst the surrounding darkness. God never leaves himself without a witness, as in the case of Enoch and Noah, and Lot and Elijah. *Where did they reside?* In the valleys of Piedmont, in the north of Italy. And amidst the surrounding darkness of Romanism, in the Dark Ages, for nearly ten centuries they taught that Jesus Christ was the only Saviour—that salvation is not in saints, or angels, or sacraments, but only in his finished work, laid hold on by faith—that the Holy Spirit is the

only Sanctifier, who makes us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. How did they get the name Waldenses? From Peter Waldo, a rich merchant of Lyons, in A.D. 1145. He founded a sect, and as the Waldenses, though they existed for centuries before in their native valleys, held the same doctrines, they were called after him.

The Albigenses, or Paulicians, were the people who held up the lamp of truth in the Eastern Church, when Mahometanism was spread far and wide. They did the same in the East as the Waldenses did in the West. This sect arose in Armenia in the following way:—About the year A.D. 660, a deacon of the Christian Church returning from Syria, who had been a captive for some time among the Saracens, stopped at the house of a man called Constantine, in Manilla, in Armenia, and for the kindness shown him, left with his host the four Gospels and the fourteen Epistles of Paul. The consequence was, that through the reading of them this man renounced idolatry, and adopted the Christian faith, and founded a sect called the Paulicians, from the Apostle Paul. These people were a light in a dark place, and confronted the errors of Mahometanism, as the Waldenses, those of Romanism. This man Constantine was set on and murdered, on account of his religion, by one of the Greek Emperors; and the man Simeon, who slew him, became a convert to the Christian faith from the fortitude of his victim. This sect refused to worship the Virgin Mary, ignored the transubstantiation, and other articles of the Church of Rome, but held the truth as it is in Jesus, and as taught in the Gospels and Epistles, which they made the basis of their creed. By-and-by they made their way to Italy, to France, and settled in the valleys of the Pyrenees, between France and Spain, as the Waldenses did in the valleys of the Alps.

The question arises here—How did they get the name Albigenses? From the town of Albi, in the vicinity of their settlement. These two were “the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks, standing before the God of the earth.” They are called the “olive trees,” likely from Zech. iv. 12, for as those trees supplied oil for the golden

candlestick, so these Waldenses and Albigenses supplied light to keep the candlestick of truth burning, when "darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." They had grace and sap from Christ, the living vine, and this was diffused to every branch of the candlestick.

They were well acquainted with the Scriptures. Some of the common people could repeat the whole book of Job, with nearly the whole of the New Testament by heart, or wrote; and the preparation of their pastors for the ministry consisted largely in learning by heart the Gospels of Matthew and John, all the Epistles, and most of the writings of David, Solomon, and the Prophets. When it is known that in the 11th and 12th centuries an entire copy of the Scriptures, for the writing alone—printing not being then invented—would cost about £60 sterling, and when it is known they were so likely to be persecuted, and the Bible taken from them, it is no wonder that they committed it to memory. Societies of young persons were formed in these valleys for the purpose of thus committing the Scriptures, and these would recite them to their pastors when met at diets for catechising.

Not only did they treasure up the Scriptures in their own memories, but they circulated them by means of colporteurs, going about as pedlars, who, while hawking other wares, had the Scriptures ready, if occasion offered, to sell them, recommending them especially for the precious jewels they contained. In this way truth was diffused, which proved, with the graces of the Spirit accompanying the reading of the precious volume, like the sap of the olive trees, to keep the candle of the truth still burning brighter and brighter. Surely these Waldenses and Albigenses are the "two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth."

2. The time they are to continue prophesying, "A thousand two hundred and threescore days." This is equivalent to the "forty and two months" of the preceding verses, or 1260 prophetic years. The difficulty is to fix the date of the commencement of the prophesying. As

early as A.D. 314, the Waldenses protested against the errors of Sylvester, bishop of Rome. In A.D. 374, Ambrose, bishop of Milan, in the north of Italy, protested against images in churches. At the close of the 7th century are found traces of a pure Church in these districts of the Alps. Fleeing from the Pagan persecutions, and at times from the insolence and errors of the Church, they sought a hiding place in these valleys, where they might worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. In all probability, about the middle of the 8th century, or A.D. 755, the Albigenses had made their way to the valleys of the Pyrenees, and from this period the two, in common, would prophesy, or protest, 1260 years against the errors of the "Man of Sin." Now the date when the Paulicians, or Albigenses, commenced, or when the stranger left the Gospels and Epistles with Constantine, was A.D. 660. About 29 years after this (690) he was put to death. It was a number of years after this when Simeon himself and his followers were burnt for the truth. Three escaped, and protested among the Saracens for 30 years, which brings us down to about A.D. 755, when the Pope became a little horn. Add 1260 to this—while the two peoples in common prophesied—and we are brought down to A.D. 2015 when, we think, the system of the Papacy will totter. If you take the Waldenses by themselves, you find them protesting against the errors of the Church of Rome from almost its beginning; if you take the two in common, from about 755, we think it solves the time of the 1260 years.

The question arises, How did the Waldenses get into these valleys of the Alps so early? In all probability, in the time of the ten Pagan persecutions. Many of the Christians fled to these lonely valleys, as others, perhaps, who could not get so far, fled to the Catacombs. Henry Arnold says, "After Paul preached the Gospel in Italy, they fled for protection to the mountains." There is a strong probability for this, for in the year A.D. 290 these valleys supplied a martyr, at the very time of the Pagan persecutions. We are often twitted with the remark, "Where was your religion before Luther?" We answer, In the Bible, preserved in the valleys of the Alps, when

superstition covered the earth and gross darkness the people. These Vaudois, or Waldenses, are Protestants of the first water, for they protested against error from the beginning. They can trace their history to the Apostles, or to the time immediately succeeding them; for one of their enemies says, "The city of Toulouse, where they inhabit, has never been clear of this heresy," meaning that of the Waldenses. Let us be thankful that God retained such a remnant to preserve the truth.

3. How were they treated? They were "clothed in sackcloth," or persecuted. The Empress Theodora, who is a saint in the Greek calendar, in the 9th century, put to death 100,000 of the Paulicians, or Albigenses. They were hanged, burnt, crucified, drowned, and all their property was confiscated to the imperial treasury. In A.D. 1213, Pope Innocent III. established a crusade against them to extirpate them as heretics. The pure faith cradled in the Pyrenees and Alps was carried to the surrounding plains. Multitudes in the north of Italy, along the course of the Rhine, in the south of France, and on the borders of Spain, walked by the light of the Scriptures. Rome seeing this, and the danger threatening her, summoned all the kings, who laid their swords at her feet to cut them off from the earth. The consequence was that 800,000 of them were, by this edict, scattered over Europe, or destroyed. It took 300 years to burn, slay, and destroy them. It did not even do it, for they lived on to this day. Their doctrines were conveyed to England, and were trumpeted in the writings of Wickliffe, and other Reformers.

Louis VII., King of France, caused 300,000 of the Waldenses inhabiting the valleys to be destroyed. On their withdrawing to Germany, they were met by edicts of the Emperor by which their possessions were confiscated, and such as adhered to their religion were put to death. They were burned in England, massacred in Bohemia, and every where condemned unheard, mere accusation supplying the want of proof. Surely they prophesied in "sackcloth." This is only a sample of their persecutions, but the "blood of the martyrs proved the seed of the Church."

VERSE 5.—*And if any man will hurt them he must in this manner be killed.*

I.—Their power.

“Fire proceedeth out of their month,” &c. This means that their powerful preaching and praying so overawed their enemies, that often bigotry and prejudice melted before them, as wax before the flame. Men would be so humbled that, like Pashur before Jeremiah, they would be a terror to themselves and their friends (Jer. xx. 2-4).

“And if any man hurt . . . killed.” That is, “killed” in like manner as he tried to kill them, or punishment inflicted, or meted out, in the same measure to himself as he tried to inflict on others. We have a striking example of this in Judges i. 6, 7, where Adonibezek is punished in the same manner as he treated others. Also in the case of the Egyptians. They reddened the Nile by throwing the young children into it, and it is turned into blood against themselves by one of the plagues. Ahab slew Naboth to get his vineyard, and dogs lick his own blood not long after. It is well known that Charles IX., King of France, was the principal cause of the massacre of the French Protestants on Bartholomew’s Day in Paris and surrounding parts, and the next year he died in most cruel torments, blood, it is said, oozing from all parts of his body. Dermot O’Hurley, Archbishop of Cashel, is another instance of the same kind. He was Inquisitor at Rome, under Pope Gregory XIII., and, being appointed to the see of Cashel, returned to this country; but acting the part of a conspirator, and fomenting disloyalty in the minds of the community against Elizabeth, the reigning sovereign, he was tortured to extort confessions, much in the same manner as he forced others to do in the Inquisition, and at last was executed. God’s retributive justice often, even in this life, overtakes sinners, and punishes them in the same way, and in the same measure, as they meted it out to others.

“These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy.” Their prayers were so efficacious that, like Elijah, they had power, if they put it

forth, of sealing up the clouds of heaven. They so prevailed with God that he granted their request, so far as it was for their good and his own glory. If their prophecy extended over 1260 years, as we tried to show, this does not mean that there was no rain during that time, but that during some "days," or intervals, if they wished it, as a judgment on their enemies, they had power to stop it, being so successful with God in prayer. But the text does not state that the heaven was shut up all the days of their prophecy, or that they exercised this power, which it claims them to have. Retributive justice belongs to God. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord;" and though the Waldenses and Albigenses often prayed for their own deliverance, and were often saved, almost in a miraculous way, yet we do not hear of them praying for judgments on their enemies, or pleading that the heaven might be shut up from giving them rain on the earth. And so their representatives, believers in Jesus, till the end of their prophecy, and for all time, are to cultivate the same spirit of forgiving their enemies, and praying for them as Christ did.

"And have power over waters to turn them to blood." The reference here seems to be to Moses turning the waters of the Nile into blood. But in the case of the Waldenses, when they were returning, in A.D. 1689, from their captivity in Geneva, they encountered the troops of the French, who opposed their progress at the bridge of Salabertram; but, notwithstanding that they numbered only 800 strong, they carried the bridge against an immense army, with only the loss of 15, while the enemies lost 600. Here the river was red with blood, as an instance of the fulfilment of the prophecy.

"And to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will." The reference is here to the plagues of Egypt; and the meaning again is that they had power with God in prayer, that like Moses, if they willed it, they could "smite the earth with all plagues." God would hear their prayer, and bring plagues on the earth for its sin. But here, as before, these witnesses, acting out the Christian and forgiving spirit, did not will this. They had the power, but did not exercise it. We read that in

A.D. 1630, a great plague broke out in the French army; they had cruelly treated the poor Waldenses, and this may have been a temporal judgment for their sin. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." He brought on their enemies retributive justice, though it is not recorded that the Waldenses prayed for it.

II.—The war waged against them by "the beast."

1. Who is he? We conceive he is Antichrist, or the "Man of Sin," the great persecutor of the saints, who "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped" (2 Thes. ii. 4). He hails from the bottomless pit. He does not come from a good region; and as men are known by the company they keep, if he is to be judged by this test, he does not leave a favourable impression behind him. The meaning is, his actions savour of evil.

2. When did he begin to "make war against them"? When they had "finished their *testimony*." Not when they had finished their prophecy, for that is to continue 1260 years, or to the overthrow of Antichrist, but when they had "finished their testimony," or at the end of the 12th century, when the system's rise and progress, as fully set forth by the witnesses, were fully developed. Then it was that the war of persecution began in right earnest, for the Papacy persecuted little for the first five or six hundred years after its rise in 606; but, when it had come to the full, and its rise and progress had been fully developed in the 12th century, then it showed its true spirit and its mind towards the saints. In 30 years, from A.D. 1540, till A.D. 1570, it is computed 90,000 Protestants were put to death in the different countries of Europe. During the short Pontificate of Paul IV., which lasted only four years, the Inquisition destroyed 150,000 of them. In France there perished several millions, besides those in Germany under Charles V.; and in Flanders, under the cruel Duke of Alva, they might be counted by hundreds of thousands. Since the rise of the Papacy, or rather during the last 600 years, there have perished of the Protestants, by that system, 50,000,000, or at the rate of above 80,000 a year. Surely it might be said of it, that

it is "drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."

VERSES 8-13.—*And their dead bodies shall lie . . . gave glory to the God of heaven.*

We have here—

I.—The death of the two witnesses.

In A.D. 1686, Louis XIV. of France had revoked the Edict of Nantz, which gave toleration to the Protestants, and he urged the Duke of Savoy to persecute the Waldenses. The united forces of the two monarchs were sent against the little band, yet they resolved neither to forsake their religion nor their native valleys. They defended themselves in their mountain passes for three days against overwhelming numbers, but at length they had to yield. Terrible destruction was carried into every humble home; 3,000 are computed to have perished; 14,000 were imprisoned in the neighbouring castles and in the dungeons of Turin, which proved fatal to more than 10,000 of them. "The jails," says Boyce the historian, "were so full of these wretched people, that they perished by hundreds, of hunger, thirst, and infectious diseases." At the end of six months only 3,000 of them were left alive in a most enfeebled condition. The Protestant states made intercession on their behalf, but though their request was granted to liberate them from prison, they were ordered to perpetual banishment from their country and their home, and sent to Geneva to remain there in exile. After three years and a half there, they returned to their native valleys, amidst the greatest opposition, under Arnaud their leader.

We think, however, that the resurrection of the two witnesses takes place before the Reformation, and not after it, as does the date of the Vaudois from Geneva. At the Lateran Council, held a few years before the Reformation (A.D. 1512—1517), under the Pontificates of Julius II. and Leo X., the object of which was to silence all that remained of those witnessing for the truth (for the Waldenses and the Albigenses, the two witnesses,

were already silenced, or apparently dead, as also the Lollards, the followers of Wickliffe), the only question that arose was—how to silence the Bohemian Hussites, the followers of John Huss? In a Papal bull issued in December, A.D. 1513, these were summoned, without fail, to come and plead their cause before the Council, if they had not yielded already to the Pope's Legate, sent to receive their recantation. They were given, as a respite, to the 5th of May in the following year, A.D. 1514, to decide. Will they face their enemies, as the Albigenses at Alba, as Wickliffe and Cobham in England, as Huss at Constance? The final day arrived, the 9th day of the session. There is no appearance, there is no word from the Legate of their approach, not a breath is heard of any opposition any longer to the Pope's authority. The orator ascended the pulpit, and proclaimed what was never heard before, and has never been heard since, "*Jam nemo reclamat; nullus obsistit!*" "Now no one speaks against; there is no opposition" to the Papal rule and religion. The witnesses appeared to be dead, wholly extinct.

Again, the text refers not only to the death of the witnesses, but to their lying unburied, "shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves." "The great city" mentioned here would appear to be Rome, spiritually called "Sodom," for wickedness, and "Egypt," for idolatry and tyranny. "Where also our Lord was crucified." The meaning would seem to be that he was crucified here in his followers. Perhaps in no other city were so many of the saints slain, first under Pagan Rome, and next under Papal Rome. There were ten persecutions of the Christians under Pagan Rome; and in the Inquisition, and otherwise, how many were slain under Papal Rome?

"And they of the people . . . shall see their dead bodies . . . and shall not suffer . . . put in graves." Princes and prelates attending at the Council from all parts of the Roman world would see that the apparently dead bodies had no appearance of any opposition to the Roman power. Not only are they apparently dead, but they are refused burial—"and shall not suffer their dead

bodies to be put in graves." The meaning is, that in hundreds of instances—I might say thousands—their dead bodies were burned, thrown down from the tops of rocks, and left to the vultures or wild beasts for a prey. See, for example, the lines of the poet Milton—

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept the truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,
Forget not; in thy book record their groans,"

Next we have the rejoicing that took place for the fate that had befallen them. "And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them," &c. Just as men rejoice when opponents are taken out of the way, so the great Antichrist, with all his surroundings, rejoiced at their overthrow. These prophets, the Waldenses and Albigenes, witnessed for the truth, which tormented the Papal powers and the Papal inhabitants dwelling on the earth. This witnessing for the truth put them to shame, and they could not bear it till they got them removed out of the way. Sin is put to shame when the light of truth shines on it. "They sent gifts one to another" in token of joy, as the Jews did in Esther ix. 19, when their enemies were slain.

II.—The resurrection of the witnesses.

Some think that the resurrection of the two witnesses refers to their return to their native valleys, as has been briefly touched on already; but, as we have said, we think the return takes place after the Reformation, and not before it, as this occurrence did. "And after three days and a half the spirit of life from God entered into them," &c. We noticed already the date of May 5, A.D. 1514, when the orator, at the Lateran Council, stood up and proclaimed that there was no longer any opposition to the Pope's rule and religion—that the witnesses were dead! Now count $3\frac{1}{2}$ days, or prophetic years, from this date, and you have Luther posting his Theses on the doors of the Church of Wittemberg, proclaiming that the gall of despotism will no longer oppress his shoulders,

that he is a free man whom the truth makes free. From May 5th, A.D. 1514, till October 31st, A.D. 1517 (the date of the posting of the Theses), is just three years and a half, each day for a prophetical year. Oh! wonderful prophecy, may we not exclaim? Though the witnesses did not literally rise, the truth, or the cause for which they were slain, rose—"the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet." The truth for which they suffered ascended heavenward, gained strength as it rose, and stood firm amidst all opposition, for it came from God and has Divine support. "The word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isa. xl. 8), said John Huss at the stake, in the year A.D. 1415. Speaking of preachers who would arise after his death, "And I, John Huss, awaking as it were from the dead, shall rejoice with exceeding great joy." This prediction had its fulfilment in the fact that Pope Hadrian said, when Luther's doctrine gained ground, "The heretics, Huss and Jerome, are again alive, in the person of Martin Luther."

"And great fear fell upon them which saw them." The consternation and dismay which fell on the Papacy at such a sight may well be imagined, when its abettors saw the witnesses alive, whom they thought to have been dead, yea and standing up firmly after such cruel treatment. We learn here an important lesson and doctrine, that the witnesses did not rise by their own power, "the spirit of life from God entered into them." The Spirit is the great quickener, who convinces us of sin, and enlightens our minds in the knowledge of Christ; who takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us; who raises dead souls from a death of sin to a life of righteousness. We are by nature, or in our unconverted state, spiritually dead, and it is only when the Spirit enters into us that we show signs of life, and stand upon our feet, to the consternation of Satan and wicked men. Let us pray mightily for that Holy Spirit, that he may quicken dead souls and enable them to stand on their feet, and do battle for the Lord of hosts. Nothing torments wicked men more, than to see those who were sinners like themselves converted, and putting them to shame by their holy

lives, their holy walk, and holy conversation. If all professed Protestants were real Christians, how would it put Romanism to shame? How would it seize them with consternation? How would it make them tremble with fear, as the leaf shaken by the wind? But this is their joy, that while many profess Protestantism, and take the Bible for their guide, they are acting as if they had no Bible, and as if they rejected its teaching altogether; and are as bad, in some instances, as those who refuse to put themselves under its guidance!

III.—The revolution that followed their resurrection.

This was the Reformation. "And they heard a great voice from heaven . . . come up hither." The Reformation was ushered in with "a great voice" of conflicting opinion. Luther and the other Reformers preached with a "great voice," and their enemies opposed with the same. It was like the voice of Ezekiel sounding over the dry bones in his 37th chapter, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." Or like the voice of Christ, bursting through the grave of Lazarus, "Lazarus come forth." "The witnesses ascended up to heaven in a cloud." The states of Europe at this time got legal toleration, they were raised from political serfdom to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. Besides, the Reformation was visible—"Their enemies beheld them." All could see Luther posting his Theses on the doors of the Church at Wittenberg; all could see him contending with Tetzel, who had been employed by Pope Leo X. to sell indulgences for the repairing of the church of St. Peter's, at Rome; all could see him standing in the Council at Worms, before such an array of bishops and dignatories of the Romish Church, and exclaiming, "God help me." It was visible to the enemies of the Reformation that Frederic the Wise, Elector of Saxony, intercepted him in the castle of Wartburgh, where he translated the New Testament into the German language, which broke the spell of the "Man of Sin." All could see the soldiers of Charles V. of Germany carrying their Bibles in their belts, as they fought in behalf of the truth

which those Bibles proclaimed. It was visible to all to see state after state renouncing the power of Romanism and its teaching, and proclaiming, "We are saved alone by faith in the blood of Christ, and not by the works of the law;" that it is something done *for* us, which is the ground of our salvation, and neither penance nor pilgrimages. In a word, that it is Christ's merit, and not ours, that is the ground of our salvation, and that faith alone puts us on this, or gives us an interest in it. This was Luther's motto, and that of all the Reformers, "Justification by faith is the article of a standing or falling Church."

The Reformation was visible, and its enemies beheld it, when they saw numbers of students flocking from other countries to Calvin, at Geneva, for learning theology. Luther may have had more eloquence, but Calvin had a sounder judgment and more discrimination. Even his enemies have done him the justice to say that his "Institutes" occupy the highest place in theology.

It was visible, and its enemies beheld it, as John Knox advances to the scene; and, as he grasps the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, even royalty itself trembled before him. He marches with the might of a giant, and the idols of Romanism fall at his presence; and with the motto, "Excelsior," he braves the tyrant and the foe, till he plants the blue banner of the covenant on the rugged hills of Scotland, and gives her a name far beyond her heather-clad home. We might mention that it was visible in the persons of Zwingle, Melancthon, Beza, and a whole host of other witnesses, but we think we have given evidence enough of its visibility.

"And the same hour there was a great earthquake . . . glory to the God of heaven." The "earthquake" means a shaking of public opinion, and a casting off of the habiliments of darkness, and the putting on the garments of light—a total upheaving of all that was ancient and stereotyped for centuries, and a remodelling of things after another fashion. "The tenth part of the city fell." This we take to mean England. The ten kingdoms of Europe were leagured together under the great Antichrist, and this "tenth part" revolted from its place in

the ecclesiastical firmament. She darted from her zenith like a falling star, and refused any longer to remain a part of Rome's darkened horizon. This was an earnest, or part, of the first fruits reaped from the Papacy. Under the Old Law, the Jews brought the first fruits of their ground and presented them as a free-will offering to the Lord, and this was a guarantee or pledge of the security of the full harvest; so England, gained from the Papal firmament, is a pledge of the whole system falling in like manner, and yielding to Protestantism and Gospel supervision. May the time soon come when the whole harvest shall be fully gathered in, and when the sound shall be heard through the whole heaven, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen! and the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ."

"And in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand; and the remnant glory to the God of heaven." By the wars that took place, consequent on the Reformation, many were slain. As "seven" is a term of perfection, and is frequently used in this book of the Revelation, the seven thousand, in all probability, would mean a very large number, a part taken for the whole. It could not be understood literally, as meaning that only 7,000 were slain at the Reformation and consequent on it, for a far greater number than this perished. "The remnant were affrighted" when they saw the wonderful commotion that took place—their friends slain, and the Spirit of God bringing conviction to men's minds of the power of the truth. The fact is, many were frightened out of their idolatries and many other evil practices, for the law has its terrors, warning men to "flee from the wrath to come," as the Gospel its power to allure to the cross. They "gave glory to the God of heaven." The law, with its terrors, from the wonderful commotion going on, and the Gospel drawing, stimulated many to lay hold on the only refuge of sinners, the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus gave "glory to God," that they had fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them.

We may learn this lesson, that no great movement takes place in nature or grace without a shaking. When Mount Vesuvius is about to burst its crater there is a

shaking all around. So in grace, as in the Reformation, and lately in the liberation of the slaves of America to political and religious liberty, what a shaking there was of public opinion, and how such liberty cost the lives of thousands of America's best sons! Many now, as at the Reformation, are giving "glory to the God of heaven" for it.

VERSES 14-19.—*The second woe is past; and behold . . . earthquake and great hail.*

We have recorded in these verses—

I.—The sounding of the seventh trumpet.

This means, we think, the ushering in of the Reformation of the 16th century. The first four trumpets ushered in the overthrow of the Western Roman Empire. The fifth trumpet brought with it the scourge of the Saracens, beginning with A.D. 629, and under it the first woe, recorded in chapter ix. 5. The sixth trumpet brought with it the incursion of the Turks, and under it the second woe, recorded in chap. ix. 12-14. And now the 7th trumpet ushers in the Reformation, and under it the third woe on the Papacy, which "cometh quickly." Between the first and second woes there was a long interval, namely, 295 years, from A.D. 762, the end of the first woe, to A.D. 1057, the beginning of the second; but "the third woe cometh quickly." From the end of the second woe, in A.D. 1453, when Constantinople was taken, to A.D. 1517, the ushering in of the Reformation, is a comparatively short period. This latter is the sounding of the seventh trumpet, or the beginning of the third woe. How does the 7th trumpet bring a woe? Is the ushering in of the Reformation so? It is a woe to the Papacy, that had everything so long its own way, in that it was thwarted in its efforts and shorn of its power.

II.—What follows the sounding of the 7th trumpet?

I. A transference of the "kingdoms" from the power of Antichrist. "The kingdoms of this world . . . his Christ." Preceding this, as the text tells us, "there were great voices in heaven," referring, we believe, to the

preaching of the Reformers, Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Knox, Latimer, Ridley, &c., ushering in the Reformation. Though the voices are represented as in "heaven," yet the Gospel is a heavenly call, "being the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16). The kingdoms rescued from Antichrist at the Reformation, by the power of a preached Gospel, and put into the hands of Christ, shall never have an end. They "are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." They are co-extensive with the age of their sovereign; and as "he reigns for ever and ever," so shall those of them converted by his grace and the power of his Spirit. They have been transferred from the Papacy here, and when they are transferred from the world at the general judgment, it is to a new existence in heaven. The Church militant here becomes the Church triumphant in heaven. The word "kingdoms," and not kingdom, means that not only the kingdoms of the Papacy then, but other heathen kingdoms, by degrees, through the power of a preached Gospel, shall be delivered from the reign of superstition and idolatry and brought under Christ's government, but that the Reformation was the beginning of the end.

"And he shall reign for ever and ever." As Christ, the head of the kingdoms, shall reign for ever and ever, so shall the kingdoms put under him. All the redeemed ones in these kingdoms shall be so many jewels in his crown throughout a never-ending eternity.

2. The jubilee of the "elders" or saints (verses 16, 17). (See for explanation of "elders" chap. iv. 4). The cause of their rejoicing is the liberty of worship which the Reformation gives. The Bible is to be no longer a sealed book. Men's consciences are to be no longer held spell-bound by priestly tyranny. The prisoners from the dungeons and Inquisition are to go free, and worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. They can now appeal to the Word of God as the standard of worship, "To the law and to the testimony" (Isa. viii. 20). True religion is no longer to consist in pilgrimages and penances and the touch of relics, but in worshipping God "in spirit and in truth;" and understanding the

plan of salvation through faith in a crucified Redeemer—in repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts xx. 21). They pour forth their souls in worship and rejoicing at what had happened, saying, "We give thee thanks, Lord God Almighty . . . hast reigned." Because thou hast rescued thy kingdoms from the power of the great Antichrist, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Why do the beasts not join in the jubilee? We think, as the ministers are represented by the beasts, and as the former form a great part of the events happening, the beasts do not enter into the vision.

3. "And the nations were angry." The Reformation brought anger to the Papacy, because it took away largely its power to hurt and persecute. First, its spiritual power was greatly diminished by the Reformation, and lately, its temporal power has been taken away. This increased its anger. And every loss of its prestige which it suffers only increases its woe.

"Thy wrath is come." This would appear to refer to God's "wrath," or judgment, on this system, for its persecution of the saints. God begins now to vindicate his own cause by the power of a preached Gospel, and consequently weakens and punishes the great Antichrist.

"And the time of the dead, that they should be judged." The meaning seems to be that the cause of the "dead," or martyred witnesses, should be vindicated. The martyred witnesses had been condemned unheard, and put to death in dungeons, and by the rack and the Inquisition; and God now "judges," or vindicates their conduct before the world, that they were right in the cause for which they suffered.

"And that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints . . . small and great." They had their reward in the "woe" on the persecuting power (not that they prayed for it, as we showed when commenting on the case of "the souls under the altar") and also in suffering for the truth. That woe is the weakening of the great Antichrist by the preaching of the Gospel. This was fully the reward of the witnesses,

and God brings forth their "righteousness as the light, and their judgment as the noonday."

"And shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." The one party has their honour vindicated, or their quarrel fully espoused; the other, which has made such havoc in the earth by the persecution of the saints, is to be destroyed or cast out from the earth, and the beginning of the end is ushered in with the Reformation.

4. The opening of the temple. "And the temple of God was opened in heaven." There may be a reference here to the cleansing of Solomon's temple, under Josiah (2 Kings xxiii). The idolatrous priests of Baal had polluted it, but the king cleansed it, and brought forth every thing that was polluted and idolatrous in it. So here; before the Reformation the Church of Rome was polluted with superstition and idolatry, but the "temple," or the Church, is now purified in part, and the Bible that was hid under the above rubbish is brought forth to give light in darkness and life in the midst of spiritual death. The "temple" is represented in "heaven" (as in verse 15, the "voices in heaven"), to show, as in the vision, that the Church is of heavenly origin. "And there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." This refers to the inner shrine of the temple, where the ark of the covenant of old resided. Those that worship in God's house, toward the holy place, get glimpses of unseen realities which the outward world are strangers to. It was the high priest, once a year, who might go in and get a glimpse of the holy of holies and the ark of the covenant; now, under the Gospel dispensation, the barrier is broken down, and all true Christians are "kings and priests to God." Even here glimpses of unseen realities, by faith, are sometimes vouchsafed to God's people, which those without the Church, and not availing themselves of its ordinance and privileges, are strangers to. We should seek for nearness to the inner shrine, where is the ark of the covenant, in all our approaches to God in the sanctuary. "The ark of his covenant" would be a more exact translation, as the Greek word (*διαθεκε*) here used is generally translated. Then there would be seen in God's Church, when the Bible is brought forth to

the light, God's covenant of grace with man—that salvation is entirely of free grace, and not of works—which doctrine was concealed before. It is the Bible only that reveals the covenant of grace, and how could it be seen or understood when it was concealed, or hid from the people?

“And there were lightnings and voices . . . great hail.” Then follow immediately the results that flow from the Bible being opened, and God's covenant of grace with his people being proclaimed—a complete, a thorough shaking of superstition and will-worship—a complete revolution in human sentiment. The “lightnings” mean that men's minds are now enlightened by the Gospel, which had been before inthralled by the trammels of superstition and tradition. The “voices” mean the proclamation of the Gospel by heralds, or preachers, that God, through Christ, the “God-man Mediator,” can be “just and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.” These “voices” proclaim that now the treaty of peace is signed—that there is peace and pardon to the guilty sinner, not through men, but through the blood of the cross. The “thunderings” mean the loud and earnest crying of preachers to sinners, to be reconciled to God through the blood of the atonement. The “earthquake” means, as hinted already, the shaking to the foundation of the Romish system, which shaking began at the Reformation, and is to be continued till it is overthrown. “The great hail” means the power by which a preached Gospel shook the Romish system. As hail strikes, and is felt; so the Gospel, by the power of the Holy Spirit accompanying it, strikes conviction into the individual, which is felt to the innermost recesses of the soul. It shakes the man out of his former security, and in sanctification brings every thought to the obedience of Christ.

We have a striking lesson in this chapter of retributive justice. Romanism long persecuted the saints in the person of the two witnesses, but now her own judgment comes, when she is made to feel the wrath of God for her sins, and the breaking up of her long-cherished system. Let people take warning by this, and leave their enemies to God, who has said, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay,

saith the Lord." There is a second lesson of thankfulness that we may learn; that the Bible has been disinterred from its long concealment, and that now all may read it and understand it. "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. i. 16).

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XI.

1. What is meant by the "reed" or "rod"?—We think Church discipline, which is often used as a means of grace.

2. What is meant by "the temple of God"?—The Church.

3. What is meant by "the altar"?—This, we think, refers to the doctrine and worship of the Church, in the sanctuary, or the holy place. The measuring line is to see that it is correct.

4. What are we to understand by "the court without the temple"?—The crowd without the Church, who make no profession of religion—Church discipline cannot be exercised on them.

5. What is meant by its being "given to the Gentiles"?—As at the temple, the proselytes of the gate, or Gentile converts to Judaism, might worship in the outer court, but did not enjoy all the privileges of the pure Jews; so now, the heathen or the scandalous may worship in the same way, but they are not eligible to the sealing ordinances of the Church till they become believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

6. What is meant by "the holy city"?—We think the invisible Church, composed of all true believers.

7. What are we to understand by the "forty and two months"?—The period beginning A.D. 755, when the Pope became a temporal prince, to A.D. 2015, when the "Man of Sin" is to be consumed, or overthrown. Forty and two months = $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, or are equivalent to Daniel's "time, and times, and the dividing of time" (Dan. vii. 25). And as the Jews calculated their months by 30 days in each, $42 \times 30 = 1260$ days or prophetic years, a day for a year. Taking A.D. 755 as the development of the great Antichrist, or the "Man of Sin," and adding 1260, the time it is to continue, we arrive at the date when the holy city, or the true Church, is to be emancipated from his power—A.D. 2015.

8. Who are the "two witnesses"?—We think they are the Waldenses and Albigenes.

9. How long did they continue to "prophesy"?—"A thousand two hundred and three-score days, equivalent to 1260 years, as noticed in the preceding verse.

10. What is the meaning of their being "clothed in sackcloth"?—Their persecution, as thousands of them were put to death from time to time.

11. Why called "the two olive trees"?—As the two olive trees in Zechariah's vision supplied oil for the golden candlestick, so they kept the light of the truth burning in the dark ages.

12. How does "fire proceed out of their mouth, and devour their enemies"?—Their powerful preaching and praying often overcame their enemies, as fire subdues stubble before it.

13. What is the treatment of the man who hurts them?—He may expect to be "killed," or treated in the same manner as he intended to treat them.

14. How have they "power to shut heaven"?—It means, we think, that their prayers were so efficacious that, like Elijah, they could prevail on God to bottle up the rain in the clouds.

15. How have they power over waters to turn them to blood?—One instance may be cited where this took place. The water at the bridge of Salabertram was red with the blood of 600, whom the Waldenses slew, on their return from Geneva to their native valleys.

16. How are they able "to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will"?—The meaning seems to be that they had such power in prayer with God that, if they willed it, they could, like Moses in Egypt, bring plagues on the earth.

17. Who is this "beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit"?—Antichrist, or the Papal system, savouring of such evil as would emanate from such a place.

18. When did he begin to make war against them?—When they had "finished their testimony," or about the beginning of the 13th century. Their prophecy was to continue 1260 years, but their *testimony* ended when the system of the Papacy was fully developed at that time. Then the persecution commenced in right earnest, as Rome did not persecute much for the first 600 years after its rise.

19. What is meant by "their dead bodies" lying "in the street of the great city, spiritually called Sodom and Egypt"?—This, we think, refers to the great slaughter of the Waldenses by the Duke of Savoy and Louis XIV. of France, in A.D. 1686, when they were well nigh exterminated, and the persecution to death of the Albigenses, by the Empress Theodora and Pope Innocent III.; and their lying in "the great city" means figuratively Rome, for Jerusalem, as there the decree went out for their extinction. It is called Sodom, as its cry of abomination went up to heaven like Sodom and Egypt, for idolatry and tyranny.

20. How was Christ crucified here?—In his followers.

21. Were the dead bodies of the "two witnesses," the Albigenses and the Waldenses, not put in graves?—Many of them were not, as we learn from Milton's sonnet—"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints whose bones lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold," &c.

22. How did "these two prophets torment them that dwelt on the earth"?—By witnessing for the truth against the errors of Rome.

23. How long did they lie spiritually dead?—"Three days and a half," or three years and a half (a day for a year) from the day the orator at the Latern Council (May 5th, A.D. 1514) proclaimed that the witnesses were dead, till October 31st, A.D. 1517, when Luther posted his Theses on the doors of the Church of Wittemberg, which was the index of their resurrection.

24. Why did "great fear fall on them that saw them" rise?—Because the truth which they thought was suppressed had once more gained the mastery.

25. What was this "great voice," which said, "Come up hither"?—The voice of the Reformers at the Reformation, calling the slain witnesses from their spiritual death, to stand up again for the truth, as Ezekiel, calling the breath of the Spirit to breathe on the dry bones.

26. How did they "ascend to heaven in a cloud"?—The meaning would seem to be, that at the Reformation, the states of Europe which had become Protestant got legal toleration to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. They were raised to a higher platform than they usually occupied.

27. What is the meaning of the expression, "Their enemies beheld them"?—That the Reformation was visible.

28. What is meant by the earthquake?—A revolution of opinion.

29. What are we to understand by the phrase, "The tenth part of the city fell"?—This, we think, means England, which revolted from the ten states of Europe, leagued under the Papacy to support her falling cause.

30. What is the meaning that "in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand"?—We think it is a figurative number for the vast multitudes slain in the wars of the Reformation and consequent on it, as seven is a complete number, the part being taken for the whole.

31. Who are the "remnant that were affrighted"?—Many that remained in the Papal system were frightened out of a great part of their superstitions, and acknowledged the mighty power of God and the work of his Spirit.

32. What is meant by the first woe?—The scourge of Mahometans, or Saracens, under the fifth trumpet, recorded in chap. ix. 5.

33. What is meant by "the second woe being past"?—The incursion of the Turks, under the fifth trumpet, recorded in chap. ix. 12-14.

34. What is the meaning of the phrase, "The third woe cometh quickly"?—The Reformation under the seventh trumpet, which was a woe on the Papacy.

35. What is meant by the "great voice in heaven"?—The preaching of the Reformers, as the Gospel on earth is of heavenly origin.

36. What are we to understand by the expression, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ"?—It means that the kingdoms rescued from the great Antichrist at the Reformation, by the power of a preached Gospel, are put into the hands of Christ and under divine sovereignty.

37. What is the cause of the thanksgiving, or the jubilee, of "the four and twenty elders," as representing the priests under the Old Testament?—(See Note on chap. iv. 4). The liberty of worship which the Reformation gave from the thralldom of the Papacy.

38. Why are "the four beasts" not represented as joining in this jubilee of praise?—We think that, as the "beasts" symbolize the ministers under the New Testament, and as these latter form a conspicuous part in the events now transpiring, the "beasts" do not enter into the vision.

39. What is meant when it is said, "The nations were angry"?—The nations of the Papal power, in all its dominions, were angry that its power was taken away from keeping men in bondage, by the effect of the Reformation.

40. What is the meaning of the statement, "Thy wrath is come"?—We think it means God's wrath coming on the great Antichrist for his persecution of the saints.

41. What is the meaning of "the time of the dead, that they should be judged"?—The time when the "dead" or martyred witnesses should be "judged," or vindicated before the world, that they were right in the cause for which they suffered.

42. What is the reward that the "prophets and the saints," &c., got?—The "woe" that fell on the power that persecuted them, and their own joy in that God had given them grace and fortitude to suffer for the truth.

43. What is the import of the expression, "Shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth"?—That the persecutors of the witnesses, or the saints, should be destroyed, or cast out from it, for their destruction of the righteous on the earth; and the beginning of this was ushered in at the Reformation.

44. What is the meaning of "the temple of God was opened in heaven"?—There is likely here a reference to the purifying of the temple under Josiah (2 Kings xxiii.) from the pollutions of Baal. And so now, the Church is purged from many of its former superstitions by the light of the Gospel let in upon it. This teaches us that the Church is of heavenly origin.

45. How are we to understand, "There was seen in his temple the ark of his testament"?—It seems to mean, that in the Church we get nearness to God; and as the High Priest was privileged once a year to go into the holy of holies and get a glimpse of the "ark of the testament," or covenant, so we may see now in the Church God's covenant of grace with man—that salvation is entirely by grace, not of works, which doctrine was concealed before.

46. What is meant by the "lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail"?—The "lightnings" mean that men's minds were enlightened with the Gospel. The "voices" mean that the treaty of peace is signed—that there is peace and pardon to the guilty sinner, not through men, as priests, but through the blood of the cross. The "thunderings" mean the proclamation of the Gospel, through the heralds or preachers proclaiming it loudly, and beseeching sinners to be reconciled to God. The "earthquake" means the shaking to the foundations of the Romish system by the Reformation. The "great hail" means the power by which a preached Gospel struck the Romish system. As hail strikes and is felt, so the power of the Spirit, accompanying the preaching of the Gospel, was felt by the enemies of the Gospel, and is felt by the sinner when it produces conviction of sin and leads him to the Saviour.

CHAPTER XII.

VERSES 1-17.—*And there appeared a great wonder in heaven and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

THIS chapter contains two striking wonders—(1) under verses 1-6; and (2), under verses 7-17.

I.—The “woman clothed with the sun.”

1. Who is meant by the woman? The Church. She is represented as “clothed with the sun,” or Christ’s righteousness, for Christ is the “Sun of Righteousness” (Mal. iv. 2). “The moon under her feet” means that the old Jewish dispensation has passed away, and that the Church is not now shining in such pale light as formerly, but in the meridian glory of the “Sun of Righteousness.” She has now put the past dispensation as it were “under her feet,” it being eclipsed by a brighter day.

2. What is meant by the “crown of twelve stars on her head”? The diadem of beauty encircling her brow. As stars are the emblem of glory, so this additional chaplet to her dress would render her peculiarly beautiful as a fit bride for the Lamb, her husband. Upon the tiara or head-dress of the high priest of old (see Exod. xxviii. 36-38) there was a plate of pure gold with the inscription, “Holiness to the Lord.” So the true Church of God, the spouse of Christ, is composed of kings and priests, and represents holiness on her forehead before the world. The twelve stars represent the twelve tribes of Israel, the type of the Church in the Jewish age.

3. What is meant by her being with child? The spiritual seed which she was to bring forth. “As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children” (Isa. lxvi. 8). And the agony and the pain mean the persecution the Church was exposed to in her efforts to bring forth a spiritual seed, or the conviction of sinners in their pangs

of the new birth. In all probability these expressions have both meanings. Some one says, I think it is Baxter, "The child is seldom born into the world without pangs, and the child of the new birth as seldom." James, in his *Anxious Enquirer*, says, "While some are drawn sweetly to Christ, many pass to Mount Zion by the very brink of the bottomless pit, within sight of the flames and sound of its wailings." No wonder that the text says—"She pained to be delivered."

II.—The "great red dragon."

1. Who is meant by the "great red dragon"? Pagan Rome, we think. At the time of Christ's death, and for some time after, when John wrote this book (A.D. 89) the Roman Empire had all nations under her sway. Here she is represented as "a great red dragon," as in power and fierceness coercing them and controlling them. It is the same as Daniel's fourth beast (vii. 7), which "devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it,"—with this difference, that Daniel's beast represents Papal Rome, this Pagan Rome before it became Papal, or nominally Christian. It is called "a red dragon," from its persecuting and bloody tendency, as it persecuted Christianity for the first three centuries before the time of Constantine the Great. It is called a dragon, in all probability taking its name from the dragon of the sea (Isa. xxvii. 1), which required God's "sore and great and strong sword" to punish it.

2. What is meant by his seven heads? The seven hills on which Rome stood, the Palatine, Quirinal, Coelian, Viminal, Aventine, Esquiline, and Capitoline. (See chap. xvii. 9.)

3. What is meant by the ten horns? The kingdoms which grew out of the old Roman Empire, and over which she ruled, Syria, Arabia, Media, Asia Minor, Carthage, Switzerland, Germany, France, Spain, and Britain.

4. What is meant by the "seven crowns upon his heads"? The seven forms of government, which by-and-by took the shape of Kings, Consuls, Dictators, Decemvirs, Military Tribunes, Triumvirate, and Emperor.

"And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth." This, we think, refers to Maximin, one of the rulers of the Roman Empire in the time of Constantine the Great. He was ruler in the East, while Constantine and Licinus ruled in the West. This empire being divided into three parts, Maximin drew the third, or the Christians that were in his provinces, and "did cast them to the earth," that is, though as Christians shining like stars above the others, he persecuted or brought them down "to the earth."

"And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born." This persecutor was ready, as soon as the Church gave birth to her spiritual children, to put them to death, by casting "them to the earth," or otherwise persecuting them. But about the time he was meditating new persecutions against them, and projecting a war against the Emperors of the West (A.D. 313), Licinus completely defeated him, when he put an end to his own life; and the spiritual progeny of the Church, or the Christians, got their liberty. When the Christians refused to sacrifice to the heathen gods they were put to death. What a blessing it was to get liberty from such cruel persecution!

5. Who is meant by the "man-child"? We have seen already that the woman's child refers to the spiritual progeny of the Church. He is called a "man-child," as a representative name of all other spiritual children, being abler to bear persecutions and trials than others. The woman who brought forth the "man-child" was not Mary, the mother of Christ, as Roman Catholic writers teach, but the Church, the mother of a spiritual progeny. A question now arises—When was the "man-child" brought forth? Every time there is a new accession to the Church of such as shall be saved, there is an answer to the question. But there seems to be a specific *time*, or *date*, here worthy of notice. The time appears to be when Constantine the Great gave an edict for the free toleration of Christianity, in A.D. 313, called the Milan decree, as issued at that place. The woman's gestation began at Christ's ascension, or Pentecost, when the

Church became developed by the Spirit's special outpouring; and counting 40 prophetic weeks, or 280 prophetic years, and adding to this 33 years, the age of our Lord at his death, it brings us exactly to the time of Constantine's edict, when the "man-child" was brought forth. This teaches us that the development of the Church, or conception of the "man-child," commenced with Pentecost.

The child "was to rule all nations with a rod of iron." How could this be, if the "man-child" meant the Church, or her spiritual progeny? The answer seems to be, that the spiritual children of the Church set a restraint on the ungodly world by their life and conversation. Witness the effect produced when a minister, or any other man remarkable for piety, passes a number of people, say at play, on the Lord's day. See how his presence often puts a restraint on them, and sometimes they either cease their folly or shrink away ashamed. The saints reprove the world by their doctrines and holy lives, and thus they restrain it and check it of its licentiousness. "Do ye not know," says Paul, "that the saints shall judge the world" (1 Cor. vi. 2)? that is, reprove the world, or "rule" it by their conduct. Again, Christ calls them "the light of the world," as reproving its evil deeds by letting the light of a holy life shine on it. Wherever the spiritual seed of the Church is found throughout "all nations," their conduct and holy example are like "a rod of iron," restraining, or "ruling," a wicked world.

The "child was caught up unto God, and to his throne." This seems to mean that in the time of Constantine, as we have seen, the Church got liberty from her persecution and persecutors, and mounted to the zenith of the ecclesiastical firmament. God interposed, through this man, as the means for her protection, and raised her above her enemies, who had so long maligned her.

"And the woman fled into the wilderness . . . three-score days." The "wilderness" means the remote and barren abodes to which the Church often had to retire in the times of persecution. The ancient Christians had

to flee to the little city of Pella; the Waldenses, to the valleys of the Alps; Luther, to the castle of Wartburg; and Knox, to Geneva, in the time of Mary of bloody memory. We see here that the representatives of the Church had to flee, both under Pagan Rome and Papal Rome (see Heb. xi. 37, 38, for the persecution of the ancient Church and her fleeing into the wilderness). Notwithstanding her persecutions, God provided, or "prepared," a place for her. And he not only prepared a place for his Church in the wilderness, but he "fed" her there. He sends none a warfare on their own charges. He has promised to make his grace sufficient for us, and his strength perfect in our weakness.

The "thousand two hundred and threescore days" have the same meaning as Daniel's "time, and times, and the dividing of time" (Dan. vii. 25), and the forty and two months of the present Book (Chap. xi. 2), and the "thousand two hundred and threescore days" (Chap. xi. 3), and the "time, and times, and half a time," of the present Chapter, and the "forty and two months" of Chap. xiii. 5. (See for explanation on Chap. xi. 2, 3).

VERSES 7-11.—*And there was war in heaven . . . and they loved not their lives unto the death.*

We have here—

I.—The seat of war, "heaven."

When this war took place in heaven we cannot tell; but it is a fact. Peter refers to it (2 Pet. ii. 4); Jude refers to it (verses 6, 9); and the poet Milton, though uninspired, refers to it in his *Paradise Lost*. John here, we think, takes the type from heaven, and transfers it to the Church below,—which is heaven begun on earth,—to show how Satan, "that old serpent," under the guise of the red dragon, or Pagan Rome, wages war against God's saints. As he was cast out with his angels already, so shall he be again, from fighting with the Church; and Pagan Rome, his instrument, with its priests and rulers, shall share the same fate. The parties engaged in the quarrels were Michael, who, we consider, was the Lord

Jesus Christ, or the Angel of the Covenant, and his angels, against Satan with his angels, in heaven. And the parties engaged on earth were the same Satan, under the guise of the red dragon, or Pagan Rome, and his minions, against the Church.

II.—The victory.

Christ got the victory in heaven, and his saints, under him, got the victory on earth, or in the Church. Constantine the Great, in A.D. 313, gave liberty to the Christians for freedom of worship; then they were delivered largely from the power of Pagan Rome and Pagan superstition; and then the Word was mighty, through God, to the pulling down of the strongholds of sin. Pagan religion and Pagan superstition were now superseded by the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which teaches men to rest alone for salvation on the person and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, as Satan was cast out of heaven, and his angels were cast out with him, the great red dragon, representing Satan and his associates, were cast down from that dominion in the Church which they had hitherto usurped. The Church, under Pagan Rome, was dominated by heathen authorities; now they are cast out under Constantine's reign, when she has got her Christian liberty. Hitherto they had usurped dominion over the souls and bodies of men, now they are "cast out into the earth," or the level of the common mass of the population, as Satan and his angels were. No wonder that the victory should be sounded from sea to sea and from shore to shore, that at last the saints had triumphed—that they overcame their enemies "through the blood of the Lamb." Hallelujah might ring even to heaven, "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Let us be glad and rejoice that the enemies of the truth are brought low. In a word, Paganism and Pagan superstition were completely subverted, and no more found a place in the true Church. The war of truth against error has been waged from a very early period. Noah, with Christ's Spirit resting on him, "went and preached to the spirits in prison," or the antediluvian world, who, in Peter's time, were in the

prison of hell for their unbelief, as a mortal sin. Moses, with the same Spirit resting on him, contended with Pharaoh and the other enemies of the truth. Joshua, under the Captain of Salvation, the "Captain" of the Lord's host (Josh. v. 13-15), maintained the same struggle, both in a temporal and spiritual point of view. Elijah did the same against Baal's prophets. Also, Daniel and the three Hebrew children against Nebuchadnezzar and his princes, in the case of the golden image. And the whole host of the worthies in the 11th chapter of Hebrews, against Pagan superstition. Coming to the ten Pagan persecutions, beginning with Nero (A.D. 64) in New Testament times, the early Christians, with the same Spirit resting on them, and under the same Captain of their Salvation, carried on the war of truth against error. And, at the Reformation, Luther and Calvin and Knox and Latimer and Ridley contended for the faith once delivered to the saints, against the Papacy, till the Church threw off the trammels of the "Man of Sin," and breathed a purer spiritual atmosphere.

III.—The shout of victory is continued.

"And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, Now is come salvation . . . day and night." Truth has got the victory over error, for the Lord Jesus Christ, the Captain of Salvation, is at the head of the army. "Salvation," or deliverance, "is come" from the thralldom of superstition and persecution, through Constantine's proclamation of liberty. "Strength" has come. The weak Christians, now favoured by princes and potentates, mount into the ascendancy, and the scale turns on the side of the oppressed. "The kingdom of our God" has come, that is, Christ's spiritual kingdom, or the Gospel's kingdom, is no longer kept back as heretofore by persecution, but comes to the front when error and superstition have been put down. The power of his Christ has come; that is, God's anointed one, or his Christ, is seen now in the power of a preached Gospel, as was recorded in Luke iv. 18,—when the Gospel is preached to the poor, when the broken-hearted are healed, when the captives are delivered, when the spiritually-blind are enlightened, and

when they that have been bruised, or persecuted, are set at liberty.

The reason of the shouts is set forth—"For the accuser of our brethren is cast down." He accused them long and incessantly, "day and night." No wonder that the persecuted saints rejoiced when their accuser was "cast down," or overthrown. Satan was the secret prompter of all the mischief and persecution which befel the saints. As the father of lies, he has now found his level; he is cast down and they are raised up. This enemy is ever on the watch to deceive and allure, hence our need of watchfulness at all times, and to have that prayer always on our lips, "Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil." The expression, "before our God," teaches us Satan's boldness. Even in the presence of God, who has ever a watchful eye over his people, Satan is not ashamed to come and accuse them and tempt them. When he hesitated not to tempt Christ, well may he not hesitate to tempt his people. His very boldness in the presence of God to tempt us should be a stimulus to our watchfulness. Let us enlist under Christ's banner, and then, under the Captain of our Salvation, we shall come off conquerors, and more than conquerors.

IV.—The means by which the victory was obtained.

1. "By the blood of the Lamb." This shows that Christ overcame Satan by blood, or by his death—"that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. ii. 14). They get an interest in this blood by faith, and becoming one with Christ, or being united to him, his victory is their victory, and they come off conquerors, and "more than conquerors."

2. "By the word of their testimony." Mere faith is not enough. We must be bold to confess the truth, as well as believe; to confess Christ as well as to believe on him. In a word, to gain the victory for the truth and for ourselves over sin and Satan, there must be the confession of the mouth as well as the belief of the heart (Rom. x. 9). As an evidence of their sincerity—"They loved not their

lives unto the death." They did not shrink from the rack and the fire and the faggot, in contending earnestly for the "faith which was once delivered unto the saints." There are few victories gained without blood. Look at the fields of Marathon and Actium and Pharsalia, and Waterloo and Lucknow and Cawnpore, and say is it otherwise? And there are few spiritual victories gained, also, without great contendings. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." It is easy to make a profession of Christianity now, but while the profession is easy, the enemies to be overcome—the world and the flesh and the devil—are very formidable. The Lord Jesus Christ had to resist Satan to the death, and so must we resist him and the other spiritual enemies, even to the death. And though we may not have to meet a martyr's death, as many of the primitive Christians had, yet the above enemies are to be resisted at every step, till we gain the victory, like the great Captain of our Salvation, and through him.

VERSES 12-17.—*Therefore rejoice, ye heavens . . . and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

The victory is complete in calling upon the heavens and all that dwell in them to rejoice. (1) The "heavens" are called upon to rejoice. Even inanimate things are to join in the chorus of such a happy song as the near overthrow of Satan—"he hath but a short time." This figure is not uncommon in the Scriptures (see Is. lv. 12), as imparting consciousness, as it were, to dead matter on account of some happy deliverance. (2) They "that dwell in them" also. These take up the refrain, as interested in the affairs of the Church on earth. If the angels rejoice over one sinner that repenteth, well may the inhabitants of heaven be called upon to rejoice in the overthrow of the sinner's greatest adversary.

These verses teach further—

I.—The warning to the world of the wrath of Pagan Rome, goaded on by the devil.

It has a "short time" from this to persecute, being overthrown in A.D. 476, and now it is A.D. 312. It would be very busy. God gave warning to the world of old of the flood coming, and to Nineveh, of judgment coming, and he gives warning now of Satan's malice, and that he will do all the harm he can, because he knows that he hath "but a short time." He will be very busy in the person of the red dragon, or Pagan Rome.

II.—The evidence of the dragon's malice.

"He persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child." The meaning of this is, that when the dragon was cast out, or "cast into the earth," by the fall of Paganism, he persecuted the woman, or infused the poison of heresy into the Church. What he could not do outwardly he tried to do inwardly; and when he could not restrain the flood of her prosperity, he tried to poison the stream at the fountain. The spiritual children of the Church, or the man-child, have got liberty; he will try now to injure the mother who brought them forth, by the poison of heresy.

The woman, or the Church, evades his persecution by flying into the wilderness. The "two wings of a great eagle" mean that the Christian Emperor, Theodosius, aided the true Church in her efforts to preserve vital Christianity, while many of her children had become tainted with the Arian heresy. He cast the Arians out of the Church, restored orthodoxy, and saved the Empire for a number of years from the incursions of the Goths, to give the woman time for her flight. The eagle was the emblem of the Roman power, and he threw this emblem, or standard, around her for her protection. The "two wings" represent the full power of his might in her behalf. The expression, "great eagle," denotes the great power Theodosius wielded for her security. The flight "into the wilderness," implies that true Christianity was hidden for a time, or ceased to be seen, amid the glory of Arianism or worldly prosperity; and the cross of Christ, with its attractions for lost and ruined sinners, was entirely lost sight of and eclipsed by false doctrine and superstition. A question naturally arises here—Why

is the woman's flight repeated? We think to mark a second persecution of her by Papal Rome. Now there was a great onslaught made on her by the "Man of Sin," commencing with redoubled power in A.D. 755, when the Pope became a little horn, or assumed temporal sovereignty, and extending through the "time, and times, and half a time" (1260 years), to A.D. 2015. She is persecuted all this time by Satan, in the person of the great Antichrist, when he had the opportunity; yet she is nourished of God for her preservation. The serpent, in the guise of Pagan Rome, drove her into the wilderness—into the Catacombs and the mountains of the Alps; and, in the guise of Papal Rome, he drove her farther into the wilderness.

The "time, and times, and half a time," are equivalent to the "thousand two hundred and threescore days" of the 6th verse. (See Note on that verse.)

As a further evidence of the malice of the serpent, he "cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman." He wanted to drown her. This seems to be a flood of heresy or false doctrine. As the Church was affected with heresy under Pagan Rome, she is also affected with it under Papal Rome. This latter has left its taint deeply engraven on the Church. When the serpent, in the guise of Papal Rome, cannot persecute her by death, he will try to persecute her by heresy, or false doctrine. "And the earth helped the woman; and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood." That is, we think, at the Reformation, when the Church was loaded with false doctrine and heresy, "the earth," or the orthodoxy of the Reformation, sucked up, as the earth does the rain, the flood of false doctrine and heresy.

The dragon is not satisfied yet. As a still further evidence of his malice, he "was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." No wonder that he was thus enraged to frenzy, when the woman escaped his various stratagems, after all his persecutions; first under Pagan Rome, and next under Papal Rome. "The remnant of

her seed," means those who still remained, after all his efforts for their destruction. The serpent's first aim was to destroy the true Church by the ten Pagan persecutions. His next aim was, under Papal Rome, to subvert her completely by the Inquisition and other modes of persecution.

We may well say, what a wonderful deliverance God vouchsafed to his Church! Had it not been for her living Head, who ever liveth and reigneth, she had been long since rooted out. But as it is said that every blast grounds the oak deeper and deeper in the soil, so it would seem that every blast of persecution has rooted her firmer in the crevice of the rock, Christ Jesus, on which she is built (Eph. ii. 20). And she will yet split up the system which has so long persecuted her. It is said that once a bird dropped an acorn in the crevice of a rock; the acorn took root and grew till it became a great oak, which split the rock and shattered it into fragments; so, we believe, it will be with Rome. That very Church which she has so long persecuted, by the power of a preached Gospel will yet shatter it into fragments, and will prepare it for the sentence which shall be pronounced over it—"Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen!"

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XII.

1. Who is this "woman clothed with the sun"?—The Church.
2. What is the meaning of her being "clothed with the sun"?—Clothed with Christ's righteousness, for he is the "Sun of Righteousness" (Mal. iv. 2).
3. What are we to understand by "the moon under her feet"?—The meaning seems to be that the old Jewish dispensation had passed away, and that the Church is now shining more brightly than before.
4. What is the meaning of having "upon her head a crown of twelve stars"?—As the "stars" are the emblem of glory, so the "crown," likely referring to the high priest's tiara, with holiness inscribed on it—"of twelve stars," would be an additional beauty to the Church.

5. Why the number "twelve stars"?—The "twelve" would represent the twelve tribes of Israel composing the Church in the Jewish age.

6. What is meant by her "being with child, and travailing in birth"?—The spiritual seed she was to bring forth. "As soon as Zion travailed she brought forth children" (Isa. lxvi. 8).

7. Why "pained to be delivered"?—The persecution she was exposed to in bringing forth a spiritual progeny, or the conviction of sinners in the pangs of the new birth. The meaning may include both.

8. Who is the "great red dragon"?—Pagan Rome, we think, represented in her power and fierceness.

9. Why called a "red dragon"?—From its persecuting and bloody tendency.

10. What is meant by his "seven heads"?—The seven hills on which Rome stood.

11. What is meant by the "ten horns"?—The ten kingdoms over which Pagan Rome ruled.

12. What is meant by the "seven crowns upon his heads"?—Seven forms of government, which were developed thus:—Kings, Consuls, Dictators, Decemvirs, Military Tribunes, Triumvirate, and Emperor.

13. What are we to understand by the phrase, "And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth"?—We think this refers to Maximin, one of the Roman Emperors in the East (as the Empire was divided into three parts), persecuting the Christians, shining as "stars," in his part of the Empire, and bringing them down "to the earth."

14. What is the meaning of the dragon standing "before the woman . . . to devour her child as soon as it was born"?—It means that this persecutor was ready, as soon as the Church gave birth to spiritual children, to put them to death.

15. Who is meant by the "man-child"?—The spiritual progeny of the Church. And he is called a "man-child," as a representative name, as being abler to bear persecution.

16. How was he to "rule all nations with a rod of iron"?—The spiritual progeny of the Church exercises a healthy restraint on the Church, or, as stated in the text, "rules" it, by their holy life and conversation. This is often as effectual in ruling it, as a "rod of iron" in ruling the ungovernable.

17. How was the "child caught up unto God, and to his throne"? This seems to mean that in the time of Constantine the Great the Church got spiritual liberty, and got an upheaving in the ecclesiastical firmament.

18. What is meant by the woman fleeing "into the wilderness"?—The remote and hidden places to which the Church had often to retire in the times of persecution.

19. How had the Church "a place prepared of God"?—He often provides a place for his people. There was a Pella for the ancient Christians, a Wartburg for Luther, a castle of St. Andrew's for John Knox, the valleys of the Alps for the Waldenses; and he fed his people in the wilderness with bread sufficient for them.

20. What is meant by the "thousand two hundred and threescore days"?—This date has the same meaning as Daniel's "time, and times, and the dividing of time" (Dan. vii. 25; Chap. xi. 2, 3). (See for explanation commentary on latter text and Questions thereon.)

21. What are we to understand by the "war in heaven"?—(1) A real war. (2) A transference of the type or figure to the Church, which is the kingdom of heaven on earth.

22. What is meant by the phrase, "Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and his angels"?—We think Michael is the Angel of the Covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was joined with his angels (1) In fighting the battle in heaven against Satan and his angels; and (2) In fighting the battle of the persecuted Christians, against the dragon of Pagan Rome, in the Church below.

23. How was their place not "found any more in heaven"?—(1) Satan and his angels were cast out of heaven. (2) Pagan superstition and Pagan idolatry were cast out of the Church by the power of the Gospel.

24. What is the meaning of "the great dragon, called the Devil, and Satan, being cast out into the earth, and his angels"?—Pagan Rome, an embodiment of the great dragon, with its priests and rulers, was cast down from its high and lofty position. And, when Constantine the Great gave liberty to the Christians, and the Gospel was preached, it, with its emissaries, was "cast down to the earth," or from its high position over the souls and bodies of men, to the low level of the common people.

25. What is meant by the "loud voice in heaven"? The triumphal shout of the Church, having got the victory over superstition and idolatry, through the interposition of Christ and his angels.

26. Who is "the accuser of our brethren"?—Pagan Rome, now defeated, as an instrument of the old serpent.

27. What is the meaning of, "he knoweth that he hath but a short time"?—That is Pagan Rome, as Satan's instrument, from the time of Constantine, when the Church got her liberty (A.D. 312), to A.D. 476, when the Pagan Roman Empire is overthrown in the West, puts forth "great wrath" to persecute the saints, and "comes down," or descends, to every species of cruelty to torment them.

28. How does the dragon "persecute the woman"?—When her spiritual children have got liberty, Pagan Rome, by the power of Satan working through her, persecutes the mother herself, by trying to corrupt the doctrines of the Church by the Arian heresy at the fountain head.

29. How did the woman escape?—The “two wings of the great eagle” helped her.

30. What is meant by the “two wings of a great eagle”?—It means that the Christian Emperor, Theodosius, threw the full power of the Roman standard, which was the “eagle,” around the true Church, to preserve her from her corruption, while many of her children were tainted with Arianism.

31. What is meant by “the two wings”?—The full power of the Roman Empire.

32. Why called “a great eagle”?—The great power of the Roman Empire, which Theodosius wielded.

33. What is meant by the flight “into the wilderness being repeated”?—We think to mark the great onslaught made upon her by Papal Rome, commencing with A.D. 755, and ending with A.D. 2015, or 1260 years.

34. What is meant by her being nourished “for a time, and times, and half a time”?—It has the same meaning as the “thousand two hundred and threescore days,” or years, of verse 6, and the “forty and two months” of Chap. xi. 2. (See commentary and Question on that verse and the following.) Also God provided for her wants in her flight.

35. What is the meaning of the serpent “casting out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman”?—This appears to be the flood of heresy: when he cannot persecute her to death, he will try to ruin her by false doctrine and heresy.

36. How did “the earth help the woman”?—At the Reformation the orthodox doctrine of the Reformers sucked up, or “swallowed up, the flood” of false doctrine, or heresy, which drenched the Church.

37. Who are “the remnant of her seed”?—All who are left in the true Church, after all his persecutions, and the heresy he tried to engender.

CHAPTER XIII.

THIS chapter continues the narrative of Papal Rome, as a new persecutor of the saints.

VERSES I-II. — *And I stood upon the sand of the sea . . . and he spake as a dragon.*

A question arises at the outset—Who is this “beast”? We think it is Papal Rome, rising out of the ruins of Pagan Rome, with the Pope at its head, as a *spiritual sovereign*. As Daniel’s “four beasts,” in his seventh chapter, represent systems, or kingdoms, ruled each by a king, or head, so we think this “beast” represents a system, and all its power is ascribed by John to the Pope, as its head. The “beast” is Papal Rome, as a new embodiment of the old dragon.

1. We have here a picture of Papal Rome, rising out of Pagan Rome, “having seven heads and ten horns.” The seven heads were the seven mountains, as mentioned already, on which the city of Rome sat. (See Note on Chap. xii. 3.) And we are to remember that Pagan Rome gave over its power to Papal Rome. The power is the same though the names are different. John “stood on the sand of the sea” looking at this vision. This means, probably, that he seems to be near, or to get a close view of the place from which the monster rose. He gets nearer in vision to the very place of his rising. The place of his rising is represented as the “sea,” which means Pagan Rome, rising in the new form of the Papacy, from its old superstition. As the sea is a commingled mass, so Papal Rome rose out of the commingled mass of Pagan superstition. The Pagan Roman Empire had risen before John’s time, but he sees in vision out of its fall, which took place in A.D. 476, itself rising again, only with another name, but carrying much of the old superstition with it.

The "ten horns," mean the ten kingdoms that sprang out of the Western Roman Empire after it was overthrown by the sword of the Goths. They are, according to Elliott, the Anglo-Saxons, Franks, Burgundians, Visgoths, Suevi, Vandals, Heruli, Bavarians, and Ostragoths.

"And upon his horns ten crowns." This means that each of them exercised kingly authority. It is to be remarked here, that in the case of the "great red dragon" (Chap. xii. 3) there were only "seven crowns upon his horns." We saw that the seven crowns referred to the seven forms of government. The meaning would appear to be here, that in Pagan Rome these seven forms prevailed in all its kingdoms and provinces; here, in Papal Rome, under the new order of things, the kingly form, or crown form, prevailed.

"And upon his heads the name of blasphemy." Whether it was Pagan Rome, or Papal Rome, that stood on the seven hills, each was opposed to the Word of God, and spoke irreverently of God. The "beast," as we have said, is the same as that in the preceding chapter, only under another form; and whatever name he assumes in his new capacity, with the Pope at its head, whether as a spiritual or temporal sovereign, he still maintains a hostile attitude to the Bible, and proves himself to be the great Antichrist, and the persecutor of Christ's saints. The two heads are so identical, that Pagan Rome is seen rising into Papal Rome, with the same number of heads and horns, only the crowns somewhat different.

"And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard." He has the same name as one of Daniel's four beasts, in his seventh chapter, and many of his qualities. As one had "dominion," so has the other, and combines in himself, in the same vision, the voracious qualities of the bear and the tearing powers of the lion. His feet, like the feet of a bear, tramps upon his prey; and his mouth, like the mouth of a lion, tears it. "And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." That is, Pagan Rome, like a dying man in his will, handed over to Papal Rome what power he possessed; and, if so, the ten Pagan persecutions were re-enacted in the horrors of the Inquisition. Not only did he give him his "power,"

and great "authority," but he gave him his "seat." That is, the Emperor handed over the headship of the Church to the Pope. In the time of Constantine the Great this was in the power of the Emperor. In the 6th century, Justinian, the Emperor, handed over the headship of the Church to the chief bishop of Rome, soon to become universal bishop, and other Emperors followed the same example. The "authority" which the Pope then exercised was often with a vengeance. No wonder that the text says, "great authority."

"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death." This does not mean one of the mountains, but one of the crowns, or forms of government, on the heads (Chap. xii. 3). One of the "beast's" crowns, namely, the Imperial form of government, was wounded to death by the fall of the Empire; yet the "deadly wound was healed" by the Pope assuming the headship of the Church and State, which the Emperor formerly exercised. "And all the world wondered after the beast." That is, all the Pope's professed followers "wondered" at his growing power, as they followed his pageant on some state occasion. They wondered further, with the feeling of delight, as they saw him ascending the zenith of his power, as a temporal sovereign, which the Emperor formerly occupied, when that head seemed to be dead.

"And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast." That is, they expressed their veneration for Pagan Rome, which, in its very fall, was the means of hoisting Papal Rome to the dimensions it then occupied. "And they worshipped the beast." That is, Papal Rome, as a new embodiment of the old dragon, with the Pope at its head, saying, "Who is like unto the beast?" In their admiration for their new master, or sovereign, they say, "Who is like unto him? who is able to make war with him?" not only as their spiritual head, but for his warlike power as a temporal sovereign. His likeness, then, or a representation of him, is seen in the seven heads and ten horns, and ten crowns on his horns, in having upon his heads the name of blasphemy—in having the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion,—in getting the power, and the seat, and the great authority of the

Emperor of Pagan Rome, which had come to an end, but now appears again in the person of the Pope.

II.—A picture of what he does.

1. He “speaks great things and blasphemies.” He professes to be the vicar of Christ on earth; to forgive sins, which is the prerogative of God alone; to create, in transubstantiation, the very creator of all things; and in blasphemy calls himself “the Lord God the Pope!”

2. He has great power. “And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.” This is a delegated power, for it is given him, teaching us that he is only a creature, only mortal. The question arises as to the starting point of the “forty and two months.” This, as we have seen when commenting on Chap. xii. 6, commenced in A.D. 755, when the Pope became a little horn, or assumed temporal power, and terminates in A.D. 2015, on the year-day theory, with 30 days in the month, according to the Jewish computation. The signs of the times would seem to point to this; and, as at the end of every two thousand years since the creation, some important epoch has occurred, may we not expect that at the end of the present two thousand some important event will also take place? This is likely to be the overthrow of the Romish system in the West, and Mahometanism in the East, which would prepare the way for the Millennium.

3. He has great daring. “He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God.” The blasphemy is repeated; he was accused of this in the preceding verse, it is charged on him again. He must be a bold spirit who can thus condemn the Most High! His blasphemy is threefold. He blasphemes God’s “name,” assuming the name of Diety himself, as we have seen; blasphemes his “tabernacle,” or his Church, composed of all true believers, assuming and holding and protesting that there is no true Church but his own. The metaphor, “tabernacle,” seems to be borrowed from that of Moses, and is a type of the true Church, where God has his habitation in the midst of his people. “In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion” (Psa. lxxvi. 2). And blasphemes

"them that dwell in heaven." That is, the members of the true Church, to whatever denomination they belong, are denounced as cut off from the covenant mercies of God if they do not belong to the Romish Church. The Pope anathematizes them all. And this is blasphemy, to consign to perdition those whom Christ has purchased with his own blood. "Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it . . . that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephes. v. 25-27).

4. He is warlike in his disposition. "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints." As Pagan Rome persecuted the ancient Christians, and drove them into the Catacombs and mountain fastnesses of the Alps, so Papal Rome persecuted the Christians of a later date by the Inquisition and other modes of barbarity. On St. Bartholomew's day, at Paris (August 23rd, A.D. 1572), and the three following days, there perished 500 noblemen and 6,000 other Protestant Christians, and in a month, throughout the kingdom, not less than 30,000, according to the highest authority. At the Revocation of the Edict of Nantz, in A.D. 1685, it is calculated that 400,000 of the Huguenots, or French Protestants, were forced to leave the kingdom to save their lives, and an equivalent number perished of famine or other privations. Henry V. had given toleration to the French Protestants in A.D. 1598, and this Edict revokes that. Add to these persecutions the cruelties of the Duke of Alva in the Low Countries, Holland and Belgium; the continental wars of France, Flanders and Germany, &c., and you have a sample of "the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Chap. xvii. 6).

5. He has universal dominion. "And power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations." It is to be noted here, that with regard to the making war, and universal dominion, it is said, in both cases, "it was given him." He has no inherent power of his own, and what he undertakes is from a higher source. This universal dominion was true of him before the Reformation; for with the exception of the Waldenses and Albigenses, who were only a handful of the inhabitants

of the earth—a drop in the bucket—the Pope ruled over the then known world.

6. He has universal worship. “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him,” &c. This verse limits the “all” of the last verse, and means that all worshipped the Pope who joined in his persecuting spirit, “whose names are not written in the book of life.” But there were some exceptions even then—the two witnesses, and others who did not sympathise with him in exterminating the heretics. Those who are the Lamb’s children must partake of his gentle spirit; but especially as the term “Lamb” conveys the idea of his death as a sacrifice for their sins, and is the ground of their names being enrolled in his book of life, they cannot yield to the spirit of persecution. He was “slain” virtually in God’s counsel from the foundation of the world, and all the sacrifices under the Old Testament dispensation had their efficacy in virtue of his being slain in time on Calvary’s cross. They had their antitype in the blood of the atonement.

“If any man have an ear, let him hear.” This is a note of admonition, calling attention to the solemnity of the subject. (1) “He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity.” Here is retributive justice and punishment dealt out in the same way in which it was inflicted. Did the “Man of Sin” lead into captivity, as, for example, the revocation of the Edict of Nantz, he shall share the same fate. He complains at present that he is a prisoner in the Vatican, and is shorn of that liberty he hitherto enjoyed. Punishment is often dealt out in the same way in which it was inflicted. Daniel’s accusers are thrown into the den of lions which they had provided, and Haman is hanged on the gallows which he had provided for Mordecai. The Pope brought others into captivity, and he has the like dealt out to himself now. (2) “He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword.” We have this illustrated very vividly in Dr. Killen’s *Ecclesiastical History of Ireland*, where he shows that many of the fomentors and promoters of the rebellion in Ireland (A.D. 1641) fell by retributive justice about eleven years after, by the hand of Cromwell, and thus had

their punishment also meted out much in the same manner as they inflicted it. (3) There is a lesson of patience. "Here is the patience and faith of the saints." And this teaches us that it is not ourselves who are to inflict the punishment, or indulge in a revengeful spirit, but to wait on God, who says, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." God will espouse the quarrel of his saints in his own time, and his own way, and it is theirs to wait in patience, not wishing the punishment of their enemies, not praying for it, but rather forgiving them, leaving the issue in his hands. The faith of God's people is, that he will turn out their trials for their good, and bring glory to himself out of them. "Blessed are all they that trust in him." The lesson to be learned here is, that the best way to resist this monster is by "the patience and the faith of the saints."

VERSES 11-18.—*And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth . . . and his number is six hundred threescore and six.*

As the last beast rose out of the sea, or the commingled heresies of Pagan superstition of the old Roman Empire, this rises out of the "earth," or Catholic nation. The first question that arises is—

1. Who is that called "another beast"? We think, Papal Rome, with the Pope at its head, in his new capacity as a *temporal sovereign*; and that the "two horns" mean the spiritual and the temporal power combined. He is represented under the form of a "lamb" for meekness, yet he still speaks like a "dragon" for power. And is this not significant of the Pope and the Papal system? professing outwardly meekness, yet prompted within by the persecuting spirit when the opportunity offers. The Pope affects great meekness, yet thunders his anathemas, and makes the nation tremble, if possible, at his word.

2. What is the power he exerciseth? "All the power of the first beast before him." That is, as Pagan Rome ruled the Church and the State, so the Pope, in his new capacity as temporal sovereign, would rule the State as well as the Church. This in effect he did when

Adrian IV. bestowed Ireland on Henry II.; when Leo X. conferred America on the King of Spain; and Stephen II. conferred the kingdom of France on Pepin, the "viceroy, or mayor, of the palace of the king of the Franks." This last act secured for Stephen the triple crown, or the Exarchate of Ravenna, the Pentapolis, and the Dukedom of Rome. This was the beginning of his temporal power; for when the Lombards came against Rome, and made an invasion on it, Pepin, for the kindness done him,—“as one good turn deserves another,”—came against them, divested their king of his dominions (the three states already mentioned) and bestowed them on the Pope. He thus acquired the triple crown, and became a temporal prince in A.D. 755.

3. What is the worship he demands for the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed? “He causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship him.” The meaning of this seems to be that the Pope now, as a temporal sovereign, causes the inhabitants of the earth to worship Pagan Rome in its new form of Papal Rome, with the Pope at its head. The Pope, now as temporal sovereign, can enforce worship to himself as a spiritual sovereign. The authority of the one department enforces homage to the other. It might be illustrated thus—Here is a magistrate, who is at the same time a cleric, as has often been the case. In his capacity as a magistrate he can enforce the carrying out of the discipline which, as a spiritual teacher, he enjoins. So the Pope, as a temporal sovereign, can enforce that respect, or homage, which he claims as a spiritual sovereign. We have noticed already how the “deadly wound was healed”—that the Pope assumed the headship of the Church, which was lost when the Emperor succumbed by the fall of the Western Empire. We have also seen the identity of Pagan Rome and Papal Rome—that the one came in to take the place of the other. “The first beast,” then, is Pagan Rome in its new form of Papal Rome, with the Pope at its head as a *spiritual sovereign*. The other, or “another beast,” is the same, only in a new form, with the Pope at its head as a *temporal sovereign*. It is so different from its former self with the temporal power that it might be called “another beast.” The Pope

at its head has now two horns, the spiritual and the temporal, and can, in the latter capacity, as a temporal sovereign, enforce the homage due to him in his spiritual capacity. The distinction between "the earth and them that dwell therein," seems to be that "the earth" means the common people, and the dwellers in it mean the ruling class, the nobles over them. The Pope "causeth" as much of "the earth" as he has power over, and as many of the nobles as he can command, to "worship" him as a spiritual sovereign, and admire him as a temporal sovereign. This last may be illustrated, as when he bestowed Ireland on Henry II. and America on the King of Spain. In this way he makes not only the subjects, but the kings, to worship him and admire his power. The "first beast, whose deadly wound was healed," as we saw, was Pagan Rome, rising in the new form of Papal Rome from the former ruins, when it was overthrown by the sword of the Goths. It appeared to be destroyed by a deadly wound, but it was healed by the new head inserted on it, in the form of the Popedom, which caused it to flourish as vigorous as before.

"And he doeth great wonders." One of these is represented in the winking virgin, and the other, in the liquefaction of the blood of Saint Jenarius; but we learn in the next verse that they are miracles of deception. "He maketh fire to come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men." It has been noticed already (Chap. xi. 5), that the bringing down of true fire, the Spirit of God, only belongs to the true witnesses, or prophets, representing the people of God. How then is this beast able to do what belongs to the true servants of God? We believe it is feigned fire; for it is only "in the sight of men" it comes down, that is, in the sight of men who admire the beast as a spiritual sovereign. It is only in their sight that such a pretended or feigned miracle could have any weight. The people of God could not be deluded by it however they might wonder at it. It is spurious fire at the best; and it is a poor expedient to have recourse to to prove a false system to be true. It is not a miracle, for a miracle, to be true, must be in harmony with God's word, which is opposed to deceiving

men, which this was calculated to do, as the next verse shows.

In the Church of the holy sepulchre, at Jerusalem, once a year, on Easter eve, thousands of pilgrims come to see the holy fire. At a time appointed they look through a crevice. After a little is heard a rumbling sound like thunder, and then the fire appears. A man runs and catches it in tow, and now a hundred lamps are lighted, and candles innumerable, by the so-called heavenly flame; and the voice of the congregation rises in echoes to the skies. But it is feigned fire after all, and it is only "in the sight of men" that it comes down from heaven. It is produced by some natural cause—by men behind the screen, striking a flint, &c.—who impose on their deluded votaries. A question arises here—Why permit false miracles? To test the faith of God's saints. If there was not this criterion the wheat could not be known from the chaff. The world runs after specious plausible appearances. "All the world wondered after the "beast." Counterfeit coin puts men on their guard, and makes them appreciate that which is genuine; the ignorant may be deceived by it, but the real banker cannot.

"And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast." False miracles may deceive them that dwell on the earth, or the men of the world—the beast-worshippers—but they cannot deceive the people of God. The men of the world have not their "senses exercised to discern both good and evil;" the elect of God have. "In the sight of the beast" means, we think, supported by the temporal power of the beast, or under his influence. The Pope, supported by the temporal power, was able to effect deceptions which otherwise he could not have done. The temporal power was still a remnant, or an "image," of old Pagan Rome. The meaning then seems to be that the Pope, by his temporal power, as the second beast, deceives the world by the false miracles which he enabled the spiritual power to accomplish. Thus the temporal power panders to the

spiritual power, and enables the latter, by its influence, to accomplish such wonders. The demands of the temporal power follow—"saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live." It is still to the dwellers on the earth, or the Pope's worshippers, to the exclusion of the saints, he appeals. The "image to the beast" means the temporal power of the Pope, which, as stated already, was a remnant of Pagan Rome. Though a new power in the form of the Papacy had sprung up, the Pope does not wish to forget the old power, and he desires the people to make an "image," in the shape of the temporal power, to keep the old power in remembrance, and to enable him to carry out his designs as a spiritual sovereign. The old power was a persecutor of the Christians; the "image" of it, in the shape of the temporal power, will enable him to do the same. The old Pagan Rome was wounded by the sword of the Goths, and lived, or sprang up, in a new form in the Papacy; and the Pope says in effect to the people, "Don't forget this, keep it in mind by making an image to it in the shape of my temporal power."

We notice now the power he exercises. "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." The meaning would seem to be that the Pope, as a temporal sovereign, "gives life," or imparts the spiritual authority with which he is invested, unto the temporal power, that, as a kingdom, it may carry out his commands. The one reacts on the other. The spiritual power gives commands; the temporal carries them out, even with the sword, if needs be. How does "the image of the beast," or the temporal power, "speak"? It does so, if not in words, at least in acts—enforcing the Pope's commands. The Pope summons councils; the temporal power enforces their attendance, if refractory. The Pope makes decrees; the image insists on their being carried out. Still further, this temporal power "causeth that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should

be killed." This is strange, that it should insist on the worship of itself; yet, this is true; for, according to the "life," or spirit, infused into it by the Pope, it enforced, for not yielding obedience or homage to itself, the killing of the Waldenses and Albigenses, and the Lollards, or followers of Wickliffe in England, and the burning of John Huss and Jerome of Prague in Bohemia. This last act took place in A.D. 1415.

What is meant by the mark he insists on? "And he causeth all foreheads." Among the heathen the marking, or branding, of the flesh was practiced; and even still among ourselves, marks, or colours, represent the profession to which men belong. The regimentals are the sign of the soldier's profession; the anchor is the sign of the sailor's profession; and, in Trades Unions, and other societies, there are certain marks which distinguish their craft. In the Old Testament the boring of the servant's ear (Exod. xxi. 6), and, in the New Testament, Paul's bearing in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus (Gal. vi. 17), had the same significance. So here: the mark is the sign of the allegiance of "them that dwell on the earth," or the Pope's worshippers, to himself. The mark was to be "in their right hand, or in their foreheads." That is, as the right hand is the emblem of bodily strength, their bodies and minds were to be both dedicated to him. What is the mark which distinguishes the followers of the Pope? There are various opinions about this; but we think that the word *Lateinos*,—a Latin name in Greek letters,—is the mark, as the Pope Latinizes everything belonging to him, the mass, prayers, hymns, bulls, &c. "The Papal Councils speak in Latin. The Council of Trent commanded the Latin Vulgate to be the only authentic version of the Scriptures. "In short, all things savour of Latin; the Pope having communicated his language to the people under his dominion as the mark and character of his empire." It is but natural then that this name, or mark, would be the one which he would wish his followers to bear, or by which to be designated. Another question arises—Does this name, according to the Greek letters, answer to the number 666? It does:—

"L = 30
 A = 1
 T = 300
 E = 5
 I = 10
 N = 50
 O = 70
 S = 200 = 666."

The same authority which insists on the mark or designation of his followers, insists also that in their ordinary traffic of buying and selling they should abide strictly by the mark, giving no liberty, if he had it in his power, to any to transact the ordinary affairs of life but those "who had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." These all meant the same thing. The mark may not be a visible sign, but only seen in the prostration of the head, or the knee, or the yielding of the intellect to subserve the interests of the Pope and his kingdom. "The name," designating anything belonging to him, and consequently characterising his followers, may not be in visible letters—*Lateinos*—but it is seen as plainly as if it were so by their acts. The number of his name follows. As it was customary among the ancients to denote names by numbers, as *Though*, or the Egyptian Mercury, was signified by the number 1218, so his followers were identified by the same number. In like manner, the followers of the beast should have the name by which their master is called, so that none could mistake their identity. The buying and selling, in all probability, refers to times when anathemas were laid on heretics, and on those who would barter with them, belonging to the jurisdiction of the Pope. This has occurred, especially among the Albigenses, and even, in some instances, in our own land.

"Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number . . . and six." It cannot be wrong to pry into this mystery. Nay, it is recommended to do so, and called "wisdom." Let the man of "understanding," having understanding of the times—for it is worth while to notice it, and count the time—"count the number of

the beast," designate him by his number, as the heathen their gods by their figures, and he will find his number, "the number of the man." That number is "six hundred threescore and six." "The number of a man" is here worthy of note. Some say it is such a number as men use in measuring; and, doubtless, this is true, for Lateinos makes 666. But it may have a deeper meaning besides this which appears on the surface. Now, the "number of a man," according to the period of human gestation, is 40 weeks, and according to the prophetic, or year-day theory, $40 \times 7 = 280$, or 279 current years. The Western Empire fell in A.D. 476; and 279, "the number of a man," added to it, gives A.D. 755, when the Pope became a little horn, or assumed temporal power. Hence, the "Man of Sin," according to this calculation; was conceived before the Western Empire fell, or about its fall.

There is another remarkable coincidence which Rev. Professor Killen, D.D., mentions in his *Ancient Church*; and that is, that from the time John was in the isle of Patmos (A.D. 89), to A.D. 755, is just 666. "Secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those that are revealed belong unto us and unto our children." The "Man of Sin" was developed in A.D. 755, as a child when it grows a little older.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XIII.

1. Who is the beast that John saw "rise out of the sea"?—We understand Papal Rome rising out of the ruins of Pagan Rome..

2. What is meant by his having "seven heads"?—The "seven heads," we think, represent the seven mountains on which the city of Rome stood. (See the commentary on Chap. xii. 3.)

3. What is meant by the beast rising out of "the sea"?—Papal Rome, rising in a new embodiment of the old dragon, out of the commingled mass of heathen superstition.

4. What is meant by the "ten horns"?—The ten kingdoms that sprang out of the Western Roman Empire after it was overthrown by the Goths.

5. What are we to understand by the expression, "upon his horns ten crowns"?—The meaning would appear that each of the "crowns," or kingdoms, exercised kingly power.

6. How has the beast "upon his head the name of blasphemy"?—Because he speaks against the truth, and irreverently against God, as when he claims to work miracles.

7. Why does John compare the beast to "a leopard"?—As he resembles Daniel's beast, of Chap. vii. 6, with his qualities and dominion.

8. How did "the dragon give him his power, and his seat, and great authority"?—Pagan Rome transferred to Papal Rome "his power" to persecute, "his seat," or headship, over the Church and nations, even before his death, as a dying man makes over a bequest in his will, so that these were virtually the Pope's before the Empire fell.

9. What is the meaning of "one of his heads being wounded to death"?—One of the heads of Pagan Rome which was transferred to the Pope, namely, that of the Emperor, or headship, was wounded to death by the sword of the Goths, in the fall of the Empire.

10. How was the "deadly wound healed"?—By the Pope assuming the headship in Papal Rome.

11. How did "all the world wonder after the beast"?—All the Pope's followers wondered at his growing power, as at one time he ruled the world by his nod.

12. In what way did "they worship the dragon"?—They venerated Pagan Rome, which had transferred its power to Papal Rome.

13. How did "they worship the beast"?—They venerated the beast in his new form of Papal Rome, and especially the Pope as its head.

14. What is the meaning of his "speaking great things and blasphemies"?—He proposes to forgive sins, to work miracles, and calls himself "the Lord God, the Pope."

15. How long is he to continue?—"Forty and two months," that is, 1260 days, or prophetic years,—from A.D. 755, when he became a temporal prince, to A.D. 2015, when we think his power will come to an end. (See comment on Chap. xii. 6.)

16. How does he "blaspheme God's name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven"?—He assumes the name of God, as we have seen; he blasphemes his tabernacle, or Church, by asserting that there is no true Church but his own; he blasphemes them that dwell in heaven, that is, the true invisible Church (heaven upon earth) as cut off from all covenant mercies, because they do not follow himself.

17. What is the meaning of his making "war with the saints"?—His persecution of them by the Inquisition, and other various ways, such as the wars against the Albigenses and Waldenses, and the massacre of St. Bartholomew in France, in A.D. 1572, and the expulsion of the Huguenots, or French Protestants, by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantz, in A.D. 1685.

18. How was "power given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations"?—Before the Reformation the Pope had universal dominion over the Church, and claimed it over the State.

19. How many worship him?—All "whose names are not written in the book of life"—all who are persecutors, with their head, worship him.

20. What about those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life?—They have the spirit of Christ *their* Master, and cannot join in the persecuting spirit with the followers of the Pope.

21. What is the meaning of the expression, "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity"?—That punishment shall be dealt out to him as he did to others. As the Pope led into captivity by the revocation of the Edict of Nantz, he shall be led into captivity. Very often retributive justice is measured out in the same way as it was inflicted, as Daniel's accusers being thrown into the same den which they had provided for him, and Haman being hanged on the same gallows which he had provided for Mordecai.

22. How is "he that killeth with the sword" to "be killed by the sword"? Dr. Killen, in his *Ecclesiastical History of Ireland*, shows that many of the fomentors of the Rebellion in Ireland, in A.D. 1641, were slain with the sword of Cromwell a few years afterwards, having had their punishment meted out much in the same way as they had inflicted it.

23. Wherein lies the "patience and the faith of the saints"?—In bearing with resignation whatever trials God thinks proper to lay upon them, without wishing vindictive punishment upon their enemies, and waiting God's time for the espousal of their quarrel.

24. Who is "another beast coming up out of the earth"?—We think the Pope, as a *temporal prince*.

25. What is meant by the "two horns like a lamb"?—The spiritual and temporal power.

26. Why is he represented under the form of a lamb?—Professing meekness outwardly, but joining with the meekness of the lamb the persecuting spirit of the dragon.

27. How did he "speak as a dragon"?—With that persecuting authority which made nations tremble before him; but he has not the same power now.

28. What is the power which "he exerciseth"?—"All the power of the first beast before him," that is, all the power of Pagan Rome to rule the nations as well as the Church.

29. What is the worship which, as a temporal prince, he demands for the first beast, or himself, as Pope?—He causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship him.

30. How was his death-wound healed?—By the Pope taking the place of the Emperor, whose head was wounded to death by the sword of the Goths.

31. What is the distinction between "the earth and them that dwell therein"?—"The earth" would seem to mean the common people, "and them that dwell therein," the upper classes, standing above them, or ruling over them.

31. What are some of the "great wonders" he does?—"He maketh fire to come down from heaven on the earth," that is feigned fire, for his wonders are deceptions, as stated in verse 14, and only "in the sight of men."

33. Is this fire really "from heaven"?—No; it is only "in the sight of men" looking on, and supposing it had come down from heaven.

34. Give an example of this feigned "fire"?—In the Church of the holy sepulchre, at Jerusalem, once a year, on Easter eve, thousands of pilgrims come to see the holy fire. At a time appointed, they look through a crevice. After a little is heard a rumbling sound like thunder, and the fire appears. A man runs and catches it in tow, and a hundred lamps are lighted and candles innumerable by this so called heavenly flame, and the voice of the congregation rises in echoes to the skies. But it is only feigned fire after all, and it is only "in the sight of men" that it comes from heaven, for it is produced by some one behind the screen—by some natural cause—as the striking of a flint by steel, &c.

35. How do such pretended miracles "deceive them that dwell on the earth"?—They deceive the men of the world, the beast-worshippers.

36. What is meant by "in the sight of the beast"?—Under the influence of the beast, or supported by his temporal power.

37. What is the meaning of "making an image to the beast"?—To constitute himself a temporal sovereign, in remembrance of Pagan Rome, and enable him to carry out his designs as a spiritual sovereign.

38. Who was "the beast that had the wound by a sword, and did live"?—Pagan Rome, which was wounded by the sword of the Goths, and lived again in the form of the Papacy.

39. How does he give "power to the image of the beast to speak, and cause those who would not worship it to be killed"?—The Pope, as a spiritual sovereign, stirs up, or awakens, the temporal power to carry out his command, and so to "speak," as with a voice of thunder, to enforce his behests; also, that the refusers of worship to the temporal power, or neglectors of implicit obedience to its laws, "should be killed," as the Waldenses and Albigenses, &c.

40. What is this mark he insists on?—As marks were the distinguishing badges of different professions, and pointed to different ownerships, so here the mark is the sign of the allegiance of the Pope's worshippers.

41. Why was the mark to be in "their right hand, or in their foreheads"?—That as the right hand is the emblem of bodily strength, and the forehead that of intellectual strength, their bodily powers and thinking powers were to be subordinated to the Pope.

42. What is "the mark, or the name, of the beast, or the number of his name"?—We think it is *Lateinos*, a Latin name in Greek letters. As the Pope Latinizes everything belonging to him, the mass, prayers, hymns, bulls, &c., so this would be a fit designation of his name.

43. How are we to count "the number of his name"?—This very word, *Lateinos*, counts the "number of his name" to be "six hundred threescore and six," the Greek Letters—

L= 30
 A= 1
 T=300
 E= 5
 I= 10
 N= 50
 O= 70
 S =200= 666.

44. Have the buying and selling with heretics been interdicted at times by the Pope?—Yes, among the Albigenses, and frequently, of late, in our own land, during the Fenian movement in Ireland.

45. How is "the number of the beast the number of a man"?—"The number of the beast," we have seen, is 666; but how is it "the number of a man"? It is the number of the "Man of Sin," from the fact that the "Man of Sin" was conceived before or about the Western Empire's fall. This happened in A.D. 476. Add to this 280, or 270 days, which is the period of human gestation, and it brings us to A.D. 755, when the Pope became a little horn, or assumed temporal power, and the "Man of Sin" was fully developed. The above days are prophetic, and represent years.

CHAPTER XIV.

THIS chapter sets forth, in vision, Christ at the head of his redeemed people; angels in succession proclaiming the fall of Babylon; and the reaping of the harvest of the earth consequent on this fall.

VERSES 1-5.—*And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him . . . before the throne of God.*

(1) How the Lord Jesus is represented; (2) How his people are represented.

I.—How Christ is represented—as “a Lamb.”

This is not only because of his own innocence, for if he had been a sinner he could not have made an atonement for the sins of others, but “he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners;” but especially because of his sacrifice, as a sin-offering for his people. The whole history of the Bible teaches us that God is propitiated only by sacrifice. It was so in the case of Abel; it was so in the case of Noah; it was so in the case of Job’s three friends; it was emphatically so in the case of Christ, when he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. As the Lamb, he has made the atonement by his blood. We have peace through the blood of the cross. We “are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Ephes. ii. 13). As at the Passover the blood must be sprinkled, so Christ’s blood must be sprinkled on our souls by faith wrought in us by the Holy Spirit. And there must be an appropriation of that blood to each man for himself; for though we are sinners in the mass, we must be saved individually. As an evidence that the blood of Christ was accepted of the Father, God raised him from the dead, to stand at the head of his redeemed

ones to plead their cause; and, as an evidence that they had the blood sprinkled on their souls, they are beside him.

1. Where he stands. "On the Mount Zion." As Mount Zion, at Jerusalem, where the temple stood, was the type of the Church,—for there the light radiates all around from the centre to the circumference,—so Christ is on the mount Zion in heaven, not only as the centre and resting point of his Church, but her Head, to give light and life to all around. There he stands, ever living to make intercession for his Church. (1) He stands pleading for her salvation. He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25). He stands pleading with his Father to send the Holy Spirit to make over the redemption he has purchased for her. (2) For her protection. The Church is his own building, and as such he is careful of her: and as the lightning-rod stands above the chimney of the great building, and is placed there for its protection, and wards off the lightning fluid when it strikes against it, so the Lord Jesus Christ stands on the Mount Zion for the protection of his Church, that when her enemies would hurl the bolts of their wrath against her he might ward them off by his omnipotent power. (3) He is there for her growth in grace. She is but a weak plant—a "vine brought out of Egypt." She needs strength and nourishment, and he ever pleads that the Father would send the Holy Spirit for her sanctification and comfort and growth in grace. He is careful that the cold and blighting atmosphere of the world may not nip the shoots and the blossoms, but that these may develop themselves into branches and fruit, to the praise and glory of God's great name.

2. With whom he is associated. His people. The "hundred forty and four thousand" are the representatives of his redeemed ones. The text does not mean that these are only the number of his redeemed ones, but a definite number for an indefinite. This position shows his humility and his love, that as he was not ashamed to die for them, he is not ashamed to be associated with them before the universe. When the

body will be ashamed of its members, then will Christ be ashamed of his people.

II.—How his people are represented.

1. As to their number, “an hundred forty and four thousand.” They were already numbered and sealed in Chap. vii., here the number is repeated, as they are seen safe with the Lamb “on the Mount Zion.”

2. As to their name. To render their safety doubly safe they have their Father’s name stamped on them, and that in the most conspicuous place, their “foreheads,” that all might see their ownership. Cæsar’s penny, in the time of Christ, showed to whom it belonged. Our coins now, with the name of the reigning sovereign, show to whom they belong, and proclaim their currency. Merchants have their goods marked, as showing to whom they belong. Is it any wonder that Christ’s people are sealed also, as pointing out their ownership? Let it be ours to examine ourselves, to see that we are sealed with our Father’s name in our foreheads, as an evidence that we are his children,—as an evidence that we are the Lamb’s purchased ones,—and as an evidence before the world of our ownership.

3. As to their song. It combines in it various tones—soft, like “the voice of many waters;” loud, like “the voice of a great thunder;” sweet, “as the voice of harpers harping with their harps.” It is “a new song,” which the angels never heard before, for it is the song of redeemed ones. The angels were never redeemed, and they could never sing it, nor enter into its spirit. It is reserved alone for the redeemed ones. They sing it before the throne where they have attained their felicity, having overcome through the blood of the Lamb. And they carefully enter into its spirit, looking at the object of their emancipation before their eyes. They sing in the presence of the “beasts,” or living creatures, who, according to our opinion on Chap. iv. 6, represented ministers of the Gospel. These were the instruments in the hands of the Spirit of pointing out to them the plan of salvation through faith in a crucified Redeemer; and now it cheers them in hearing the song which they had been instrumental in

any way in leading to the singing of. They only pointed out the way; Jesus Christ is the only Redeemer. Further, they sing it in the presence of the "elders," who we saw, also in Chap. iv., are the representatives of the priests. This limited number of "an hundred forty and four thousand" is the type, or the first-fruits, of the great spiritual harvest of that "great multitude which no man could number." It is a song which no man could learn "but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth." As the angels could not sing it, much less could the unregenerate enter into its spirit and attune their voices to its strain. They never sought Christ, and they can never sing the song of the redeemed ones who sought and found him.

4. As to their purity. "They are virgins." The apostle John does not confine the term to one sex, as is generally done, but applies it to all the redeemed ones, to designate their purity—a "peculiar people, zealous of good works." These 144,000, as we have seen already, are the representatives of all the redeemed, who are holy and uncontaminated with the pollutions of the world. They "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." They take him for their example, and, as his disciples, they follow him wherever he leads, and go no place where he would not go, and where they could not take him with them. Here is a simple test for his professed followers. If we are at any time doubtful whether we should go to such a place, let us ask ourselves, "Is it such a place where Christ would go if he were here on earth? and could we take him with us to it? or would we be ashamed if he found us in it? If so, we have no right to go, or to be found there. Could we take him with us to the theatre? or to the horse-race? or to the coursing? or to the ball-room? If not, let us not be found there, but follow him "whithersoever he goeth." Having followed the Lamb here, his people are with him in heaven. "These were redeemed from among men." The reference seems to be to Numbers iii. 12, where the Levites were redeemed from among the children of Israel in lieu of the first-born. From the time the first-born were slain in the land of Egypt by the destroying Angel (Ex. xii. 29) God always claimed the

first-born as his (Numb. iii. 13). As the males of the other eleven tribes (verse 43) were in excess of the males of the Levites by two hundred and threescore and thirteen (verse 39), God accepted redemption—money for them (verses 46-49). His justice demanded their death, his mercy accepts the redemption—money for them. As these were redeemed from among their brethren, when they had a right to be slain, so Christ redeems his people from among men, “being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.” The first-fruits among the Jews were presented as a free-will offering to the Lord (Numb. xviii. 8-10), and this was a pledge of the security of the whole harvest; so these 144,000, “redeemed from among men,” are a pledge of the security of all the redeemed.

“And in their mouth was found no guile.” They were not found saying one thing and doing another, as is too often the case among men, but imitating the example of their Lord and Master himself, “who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.” “They are without fault before the throne of God.” They were not without fault here, “for there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not” (Eccles. vii. 20); but their sins were all washed away in the blood of the Atonement, and having been freed from every remnant of pollution by the power of the Holy Spirit in sanctification, they now stand before the throne “without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.”

VERSES 6-12.—*And I saw another angel . . . here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*

I.—We have here the mission of “another angel,” or minister, of whom the “four beasts” are the representatives (Chap. iv. 6), the flying angel to preach the everlasting Gospel.

1. Why this necessity? Because natural religion, that is, the knowledge we get of God from his works by our senses, would never teach us the plan of salvation through the merits of a crucified Redeemer. Till the Gospel appeared, all the systems of philosophy that were ever propounded could never tell how “God could be just,

and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." "The everlasting Gospel" shows the plan of salvation, solves the mystery—that Christ Jesus satisfied God's law and justice in our room and stead, and now "mercy and truth can meet together, righteousness and peace can kiss each other." The heathen have natural religion before their eyes and in their minds, and they are still "perishing for lack of knowledge;" and no nation ever yet emerged from barbarism and infidelity to Christianity and the knowledge of the truth without revealed religion, as exhibited in the Gospel. No wonder the necessity for a preached Gospel. It teaches us that we are sinners (Rom. iii. 23); that the law cannot save us (Rom. iii. 20); that God has provided a righteousness, which was wrought out by the obedience of his Son in his life and death; that it is laid hold on by faith; that it is "unto all and upon all them that believe" (Rom. iii. 22); and that the design of it is to render him "just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26).

2. Why call it "the everlasting Gospel"? (1) Because it was designed from everlasting. God saw from eternity that man would fall, and that this would involve him in everlasting ruin, and he designed from eternity to provide a remedy—a Gospel of good news, or glad tidings, that would save him from hell and raise him to heaven. No wonder that it is called "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," and in the text before us, "the everlasting Gospel!" (2) Because its effects extend to everlasting. It points to the Saviour, that through faith in his blood the sinner may secure a salvation which will last to eternity. And this salvation, which is revealed through the Gospel, is for "them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" in all the earth, and need "the everlasting Gospel" to reveal to them the plan of salvation which is to save them for everlasting. As the effects of the Gospel bear on the destiny of sinners for eternity, no wonder that the angel proclaimed with a "loud voice," marking his earnestness—"Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come." The nations are in his

hands as clay in the hands of the potter, and as the vessel is marred on the wheel, and deserves nothing but condemnation, no wonder they are called upon to "fear God" and take hold on his mercy, through the merits of a crucified Redeemer, whom the Gospel proclaims to have been "delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification." But they are to give glory to God as well as fear him, in having provided a remedy for the chief of sinners in the death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ, who bare our sins and carried our sorrows, and is "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." God certainly deserves the glory, in that "he hath made Christ to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. v. 21), and thus "he can be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

The "judgment" here seems to be the overthrow of idolatry generally, beginning with its overthrow at Pentecost, when the Gospel was promulgated; its subversion at the fall of the Pagan Roman Empire; and its further demolition at the fall of Papal Rome. The angel appears to represent the preacher of the Gospel beginning his message "in the midst of heaven" (verse 6) or in the midst of the Church, "beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke xxiv. 47) and "flying" to "the uttermost parts of the earth." "And worship him that made heaven fountains of waters." God alone is the object of worship. He claims this. He hath made us, he preserves us, he gave his Son to die for us, and his Spirit to sanctify us; besides, he does not withhold many other things which he gives us richly to enjoy. His creation of all these things shows his great power; and as all these things minister to our happiness, surely it becomes us to worship him who made them.

II.—The errand of the *second* angel.

This was to proclaim the overthrow of Babylon. This second "angel," or messenger, is also a representative person, and may be taken as the type, as Dr. Glasgow says, of Home Mission preachers. His message, especially, is to call attention to the downfall of Rome, of

which ancient Babylon was the representative. As old Babylon fell, so Pagan Rome fell: and as Papal Rome rose on the ruins of the latter, carrying much of its spirit with it, the messenger asserts that it will also fall, notwithstanding its greatness and impregnability. Three questions here arise—

1. *When* will it fall? It was developed in A.D. 755, when the Pope became a little horn, or assumed temporal power, and 1260 years, equivalent to the "time and times and half a time," which it is considered to extend over, brings us to A.D. 2015, which, we think, may be the date of its overthrow.

2. *How* will it fall? By the preaching of the Gospel. It was through this instrumentality, in the Spirit's hands, that Pagan Rome fell, and the ancient idols crumbled in the dust; and it is by the same machinery, we believe, that the proud Roman Babylon, towering to the skies, is also to fall. "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16). It is said of a tree that "it lives as long after it has grown, as it was in growing." Let us apply this adage to Rome, and it will bring us to the same conclusion. It was developed in A.D. 755, and is to continue 1260 years. Take the half of this time till it arrived at its growth—A.D. 1385—and the second half, which it is to continue after, and it brings us exactly to the 1260 years, the date assumed for its downfall.

Wickliffe began the Reformation in England just about the time that the Romish system was at its height. He died in A.D. 1384. Before his death he began to lay the Gospel axe to the root of this great gigantic tree, and prepared the way for other reformers. John Huss and Jerome of Prague, in Bohemia, influenced by Wickliffe's writings, attacked this system, which cost them their lives. Then Luther and Calvin arose at the Reformation, and, with right heavy bill-hooks, lopped off branch after branch from this tree, reducing it considerably from its former dimensions. Knox in Scotland, and Latimer and Ridley and Cranmer in England, still farther came to the rescue, to strike it at the roots with the two-edged sword of the Gospel. By the lopping off of the temporal power in A.D.

1870, it began to groan, which foreshadows its coming fall. Every stroke of the Gospel axe, by the Missionaries at home and abroad, is sapping it at the root, and as the higher the tree the greater the fall, so shall it be with Rome. No wonder that the angel proclaimed in vision—"Babylon is fallen, is fallen."

3. *Why is it to fall?* "Because she made all nations drink . . . of her fornication." She made all nations intoxicated with her false doctrine. As Papal Rome, before the Reformation, had sway over all nations, so she made all nations, often at the point of the sword or in sight of the rack or the fire, to drink in her false system. Has she not, like the Jews, "taught for doctrines the commandments of men?" Has she not taught for salvation dependence on prayers and alms and sacraments? Has she not taught pilgrimages, penances, and intercession of saints and angels, instead of entire dependence on the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ and his all prevailing intercession? "The wine of the wrath of her fornication" means the wine which brings wrath. As she incurred the wrath of God for her fornication, or false doctrine, so by her drugging the nations with it she brings on them the same displeasure.

III.—The errand of the *third* angel.

To warn against Rome's sins. "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive . . . indignation.. For explanation of "beast and his image," and "mark in forehead, or hand," see Chap. xiii. 14-16. This angel also cried with a loud voice, to show his earnestness in calling out men from what he looked upon as a system of evil. "The wine of the wrath of God" is God's anger. His anger, in Scripture, is compared to a wine cup, and Christ says (Luke xxii. 42), "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me." And those that partake of Rome's sins must drink of God's wrath, or "the wine of his wrath which is poured out without mixture." The meaning of the latter expression is that there is no dilution or mitigation of the punishment in reserve for those who are partakers of Rome's sins, if unrepented of. They will be forced to drink the bitter dregs of that cup of God's

wrath. "And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence . . . the Lamb." This is the doom of the "man," and all associated with him, who "worship the beast and his image," and are identified with "his mark." The expression, "in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb," teaches that, while the punishment of the wicked is far removed from heaven, the heavenly inhabitants can see it at a distance. And, reversing the picture, as in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 23), Dives can see Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom, so the wicked could see the happiness of heaven, which, in all probability, adds to the sufferings of hell. Though seeing the misery of hell does not detract from the happiness of heaven—as heaven is a place of perfect happiness—yet seeing the happiness of heaven, and never being able to enjoy it, must add to the sufferings of the lost. This should teach us surely to avoid Rome's sins, that we may avoid Rome's miseries, and shun all sin, for every sin deserves God's punishment now and for ever. The Lamb, however, mentioned in the text, "appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," and his blood cleanseth us from all sin. Another lesson may be learned from this, which is, the danger of making intermarriages with Rome, lest in this way we may be drawn into her snares and share her guilt. And a third lesson, the advisability of young people avoiding making companions of her followers, lest they also be allured by her and partake of her plagues.

"And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." This teaches the eternity of future punishment. And in keeping with this must be the eternity of the happiness of the righteous. If the one is eternal, so must the other, and hence the argument, with tremendous force to shun the sins that lead to such punishment, and seek an interest by faith in the blood of the Lamb which secures such happiness. This is against conditional immortality, which teaches that the wicked are annihilated at death.

The patience of the saints commended. "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep . . . of God, and the faith of Jesus." For exposition of the

"patience of the saints" (see on Chap. xiii. 10). "They that keep the commandments of God," &c., are those who come out from Rome's sins, and shun all appearance of evil—who come out from her doctrines, and instead of placing faith in saint or angel, however exalted, have "the faith of Jesus" only, as the one "name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12).

VERSES 13-15.—*And I heard a voice from heaven . . . harvest of the earth is ripe.*

These verses give a description of the blessed dead, and of him in whom they die.

I.—The blessed dead.

They are happy who "die in the Lord." The "dead" here, in all probability, refer to the martyrs slain under Pagan Rome, the first beast, and under Papal Rome, the second beast. The voice comes from heaven; and to show that it is part of the vision, and authentic, it is confirmed by the Spirit, "Yea, saith the Spirit." These saints are possibly those that were "under the altar" (Chap. vi. 9), who had little comfort in life, being persecuted for their religion, and at last slain for it. Yet, what the world could not give them—comfort—God does. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." The expression, "henceforth," means that whatever sufferings they had hitherto, "henceforth," or from this time, the time of their death, they are happy, or "blessed." This is against the doctrine of Purgatory, that at death the saints must go through a purgatorial fire to make them meet for heaven, where only they can be blessed. The text teaches that at death they are "blessed," and is in keeping with Paul's teaching (2 Cor. v. 8), "Willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

"They rest from their labours." Not only are they "blessed" in being with the Lord, but they are free from the labours and trials to which they were formerly exposed. "And their works do follow them." Not as a reward. They get their reward on the ground of the

finished work of Christ in their room and stead, being made partakers of his death in justification, and his Spirit in sanctification; but "their works follow," or remain, behind them, influencing others, and leavening the mass, as the leaven does the meal, to make them better than they were before. Their works exert a wholesome influence for good, and their example is felt when they are gone.

II.—A description of him in whom they die.

This is the "Lord" Jesus Christ, the "first-fruits of them that slept." He is represented on a "white cloud," and "like unto the Son of man." This indicates his purity, and as such, being without spot like a white cloud, he is fit, with his Divine and human natures, to be a Mediator. If Christ had been a sinner himself, he could not have made an atonement for the sins of others, but he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." He is represented in Chap. iv. 3, as surrounded by a rainbow, and here, on a white cloud, both indicating encouragement. There is a hope for the Church, however long she may have been under a flood of persecution, and however long she may have been kept under a cloud of darkness. He is "like unto the Son of man." This is a still further encouragement to his Church—that he has a nature like her own, and that he is able to sympathise with her in all her difficulties and all her trials (Heb. iv. 15).

He has "on his head a golden crown." This shows that he is a king and able to protect his people. They are exposed to many enemies, and persecutions, and trials, but he that is for them is greater than he that is against them, and he shall dash their enemies "in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Psa. ii. 9). It is "a golden crown," indicating complete sovereignty and perfection. Gold is the perfection of all metals, Christ is crowned with this choicest production. The idea of his priesthood may not be apart from this description also. As the priest wore a sacerdotal chaplet, so the crown here may indicate his intercession as a priest—"He ever liveth to make intercession for them." The altar of incense was of gold, typifying the

purity of Christ's intercession; and the golden crown here may also bear a like similitude.

He has "a sharp sickle" in his hand. As he is powerful as a king, and perpetual as a priest, reigning and pleading for ever, he has a sharp sickle, as a pledge of the Gospel, in his hand, to gather in the spiritual harvest. His ministers are reapers; but he is the chief workman.

III.—The harvest itself.

1. Harvest work—reaping. This other angel who urges to harvest work must be one of the ministers of the Church, as the "temple" is the representative of the Church. He is sent to cry earnestly to put in the "sickle," or the Gospel, to gather in the souls to the granary of the Church. His address is directed to him that sitteth "on the cloud," the King and Head of the Church, who has all power in and over her to accomplish the ingathering of the harvest. The harvest is *busy work*. Hands are at it early and late, and in earnest. So should it be in the Church, to gather in the harvest of souls that are to be reaped. Ministers and elders and deacons and Sabbath-School teachers and Churchwardens and class-leaders, in a word, the whole Church machinery should be set in motion, early and late, and in earnest, to cut at the root of Antichrist and every false system, and to drag from their midst souls perishing for lack of knowledge, and secure them for the great harvest-home. Many forces are already at work for this purpose—the steam-press, the Bible Societies, the Tract Societies, the Bible and Colportage Society for Ireland, and the other Gospel machinery, embracing Bible Classes and Sabbath Schools; but there is still ample room for more, and especially more courage to accomplish the end in view. If this is to be effected by work,—evangelistic work, accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit,—by working as well as giving for this object—then all should be at work to usher it in.

2. Harvest time. "The time is come for thee to reap." The "angel," or messenger, urges, as a reason for reaping—that "the harvest of the earth is ripe." What does this "time" refer to? However, it may have referred to the time of Antichrist from its rise, and at

the Reformation, when the Romish Church was "drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus," we think it refers emphatically to the present time, when she is laying such claims to universal dominion and adding to her dogmas, to give her a more comprehensive grasp as to spiritual matters. She added the "Immaculate Conception" of the Virgin Mary to her creed in 1854, and the "Pope's Infallibility" in 1870; and if, in addition to her age, she becomes more aggressive and more domineering, claiming not only the right to all dominion, but all souls, then surely the time has come in reality, when evangelical Protestantism should put in the sickle to reap and save souls from the power of her grasp.

The children of Israel did not get into Canaan till the iniquity of the Amorites was full (Gen. xv. 16). We think that the iniquity of this system is well nigh come to the full when, in addition to the charges already preferred, she adores saints and angels. Surely "the time is come to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." Christ, the King and Head of his Church, at length thrusts in his sickle. He is the moving power, his ministers are the labourers under him, and the work is accomplished. He will bring the Romish system to an end at an appointed time, having gathered the redeemed out of her, and then she will fall with a great crash, the shout being raised over her—"Babylon the great is fallen! is fallen!"

As the whole harvest is not reaped at the time of the thrusting in of the sickle, it being only the beginning of the end, so Christ, sitting on his throne, began to reap at Pentecost, and has been reaping ever since, and at the fall of Babylon and the ushering in of the Millennium, the earth may be said to be reaped.

VERSES 17-20.—*And another angel came out of the temple . . . furlongs.*

These verses set forth—

I.—Vintage work.

1. To whom is it entrusted? To "another angel out of the temple in heaven." The preceding angel was out of the temple on earth, the representative of the ministers of

the sanctuary. This "angel," or messenger, is "out of the temple in heaven," and would seem to be the Holy Spirit, who holds in his hand "a sharp sickle" for reaping, as well as the Lord Jesus Christ. We argue that he is not a common angel, or messenger, for two reasons. First, the former angel and the succeeding one are neither of them represented as holding a sickle; and, secondly, this one is "out of the temple which is in heaven," which neither of the others is represented as coming from. We have here implied the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, that he has power to reap as well as Christ, and take his part in the great harvest work. He dwells in his people, as the great moving agent of their work and success, and gives efficacy to the Gospel message for their edification and growth in grace, and also for the conversion of sinners. (See 1 Cor. iii. 16; 2 Thes. ii. 13.)

We are to notice here the distinction between harvest work and vintage work. Harvest work, as we have seen, is gathering the elect out of Babylon—the reaped sheaves into the granary. Vintage work, is gathering the wicked into the "winepress of the wrath of God." Why is the vintage work assigned to the Holy Spirit? Because, we think, they rejected his strivings. The "Spirit will not always strive with man." This was one of the charges Stephen brought against the Jews (Acts vii. 51), "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." Hence the lesson—the danger of resisting his strivings.

2. At whose request does the Holy Spirit thrust in the sickle? That of "another angel." Who is he? We think he is another of the ambassadors, or ministers, of the Gospel. He has no sickle and does not exercise the function of wielding it. Where does he proceed from? "The altar," to show that he is the representative of an attendant there, and engaged in preaching the Gospel, or in feeding the flame at the altar, or now in the sanctuary. That seems to be the meaning of his having "power over fire." The allusion seems to be to the incense offered on the golden altar, the type of prayer, or intercession (Exod. xxx. 1, 3, 8). As the incense came up with acceptance, so this angel's prayers had power to bring down the fire of the Spirit. He "cried with a loud cry"—showing his

earnestness—"to him who had the sharp sickle," to "thrust" it in "and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth." The "clusters," allude to obstinate sinners, who reject the Holy Ghost. Instead of the "vine of the earth," which got such cultivation, instruction, and training, bringing forth grapes to God's glory, this vine brought forth wild grapes for destruction. "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes" (Isa. v. 4). And now the punishment—"Her grapes are fully ripe"—that is, ready for punishment. Here is a warning for all rejecters of God's Gospel and resisters of the Holy Spirit—"Her grapes are fully ripe!"

3. The nature of the Spirit's work. (1) He gathered the "vine of the earth." This means the wild vine, or that which brings forth the grapes of Sodom and clusters of Gomorrah, grapes of gall and clusters that are bitter. We are told that on the shore of the Dead Sea, and other parts of Palestine, there are wild vines which bring forth fruit like grapes, but, when it is tested, it is bitter and often poisonous. So here, professing Christians bring forth apparent fruit, but, when it comes to be tested, it is like the fruit we have been describing. And so the angel here, or the Holy Spirit, thrusts in his sickle to crop, or "gather" in, the spurious vines and every planting of Anti-christ and of every false system. Besides the Spirit's doing harvest work, quickening sinners and sanctifying saints, he does here vintage work.

We are not to infer that the angel, or messenger, who entreats the Holy Spirit, wishes the destruction of individuals, for that is contrary to Christ's command—"love your enemies"—but the destruction of the system which nourishes such vines and generates them. (2) He "cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God" *First*, notice the nature of the "winepress." In the East, it was a cavity of 8 feet by 3 feet, lined with mason work (Matt. xxi. 33). Here the grapes were cast in and pounded, or trodden out. And as in Isaiah lxiii. 3, the winepress is of Christ's treading, meaning the treading of Jehovah's wrath; so here it typifies the wrath of God to be poured

out on Antichrist and every other false system. *Second*, notice the place of the winepress, "without the city." The allusion, probably, is to the place "without the gate" where our Lord was crucified, to mark God's abhorrence of sin. (See Num. xix. 9; Heb. xiii. 11, 12.) Or the allusion might point to the place without the city of Rome,—the States of the Church,—which, before A.D. 1859, extended to about "a thousand and six hundred furlongs," or about 17,000 square miles. This area is typical of the whole extent of Romish Christianity. As this was trodden down and taken from the Pope, part of it then, and entirely in A.D. 1870; so, in God's time, will Romish territory, or "earth," together with Mahometanism and every trace of Antichrist, be removed out of the way and feel the power of his wrath.

"And blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse-bridles." This refers, in all likelihood, to the wars that are to be waged before the ingathering is fully accomplished. As there was a war in Rome, when in A.D. 1870 the French troops were removed and Victor Emmanuel's rushed in and took possession of the States; so, in all probability, before Antichrist is "trodden out" from the earth, the blood of war will bespatter the horse-bridles of the combatants. War is the wrath of God against a city or nation; and the depth of the wrath may be measured from the fact, that it rose from the winepress as high as the horse-bridles. The blood extended "by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." That is, as Mede says, "the length of the Pope's territory." The 1,600 furlongs are a type of the whole extent of Romish Christianity.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XIV.

1. Who is the "Lamb" here?—The Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Why is he called "a Lamb"?—(1) On account of his innocence; but (2) especially on account of his being a sacrifice for sinners.
3. Why is he represented "on Mount Zion"?—As Mount Zion, at Jerusalem, was the centre of the earthly Church, giving spiritual

life and spiritual light all around, so Christ, as the Lamb, is on the Mount Zion in heaven, as the Head of his Church, giving spiritual life and light to all true members.

4. Why is he represented as standing?—Because he is the Church's Advocate: and as an advocate stands up and pleads for his clients, so Christ pleads (1) for the salvation of his people, and (2) for their protection.

5. Whom do the "hundred and forty and four thousand" represent?—The whole number of the redeemed.

6. Why is the "Father's name written in their foreheads"?—As coins and goods are stamped with the name of the owner, so God's people are stamped with his own mark for their security.

7. Why is their song represented as a "new song"?—It is new to the angels, they never heard before the song of redeeming love, as they were not redeemed themselves.

8. Why are they represented as "virgins"?—To designate their purity—"a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

9. What is their character?—"They follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." They go where he leads and they shun where he warns.

10. What does the expression, "redeemed from among men," mean?—It means that the above number are a pledge of the security of the whole harvest of believers, or "redeemed" ones.

11. Where are they "without fault"?—Not here—"for there is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not (Eccles. vii. 20)—but "before the throne."

12. Who is this other angel, represented as "flying in the midst of heaven"?—We consider he is a minister, of whom the "beasts," or living creatures, are the representatives (Chap. iv. 6), hastening to preach the Gospel.

13. What is meant by "the midst of heaven"?—We consider the true Church, elevated above the world, but not yet in the heaven of heavens.

14. Why is it called "the everlasting Gospel"?—(1) Because it was appointed from everlasting, to teach fallen man how to be saved in the blood of Christ. (2) Because its effects extend to everlasting.

15. What is meant by "the hour of his judgment"?—The overthrow of idolatry generally throughout the earth, by the preaching of the Gospel.

16. Who is another angel, who comes up in the eighth verse?—Another minister, whose mission is to proclaim the overthrow of Babylon, or Rome, the former being the representative of the latter.

17. When will Rome fall?—It became developed in A.D. 755, when the Pope became a little horn, or assumed temporal power, and adding 1260 years, the time it is to continue, brings us to A.D. 2015, when we think it will fall.

18. How will it fall?—By the preaching of "the everlasting Gospel."

19. Why is it to fall?—Because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, or her false doctrine.

20. Who is "the third angel"?—Another faithful messenger, or minister, deputed of Christ to warn against Rome's sins, and cried "with a loud voice," to show his earnestness.

21. What is meant by the beast and his image, and his mark in the forehead?—(See answer to Questions 1, 36, 39, 40 of Chap. xiii.)

22. What is meant by "the wine of the wrath of God, without mixture"?—As his anger, in Scripture, is compared to a wine-cup (Luke xxii. 42); so those partaking of Rome's sins, if not repented of, must bear his greatest "indignation," without mitigation, as the wine was "without mixture."

23. How is this borne "in the presence of the angels and in the presence of the Lamb"?—The meaning would seem to be, that the heavenly inhabitants can see the punishment of the wicked, as the latter can see the happiness of the righteous (Luke xvi. 23).

24. How long does the torment of the wicked continue?—"For ever and ever." This is against the doctrine of conditional immortality, that the wicked are annihilated at death.

25. What is meant by "the faith of Jesus"?—The faith that lays hold of Jesus, as the only Saviour, in opposition to faith in saint or angel.

26. How do the "works" of those "who die in the Lord follow them"?—Not as a reward, for their reward rests on the finished work of Christ for them, but influencing others behind them, making them better than before.

27. What is meant by the "Son of Man" on a "white cloud" and with "a golden crown"?—It intimates his purity to fit him for being a Mediator.

28. Why called "the Son of man"?—To show that he has a human nature for sacrifice, in bearing our sins and carrying our sorrows.

29. Why represented as having a crown?—To show that he is a king, and able to protect his people as well as redeem them.

30. What is meant by the "sharp sickle"?—The power of the Gospel in Christ's hand, to gather in the spiritual harvest. If ministers are reapers, he is the Master reaper.

31. Who is "another angel" who "came out of the temple"?—Another minister of the Church.

32. What is meant by "the harvest of the earth" being "ripe"?—Ripe for being rescued from the power of Antichrist and every false system.

33. When does this take place?—The reaping began at Pentecost, and may be said to be complete at the Millennium, when the great Antichrist and other false systems shall have fallen.

34. Who is this "other angel who comes out of the temple—heaven—with the sharp sickle"?—We think the Holy Spirit, who holds in his hand a "sharp sickle" for reaping the harvest as well as the vintage.

35. What is the distinction between harvest work and vintage work?—The former is the gathering of souls for happiness; the latter, the gathering in of the unconverted for punishment,

36. How does the Holy Spirit use his sickle for both?—He is the great agent of holiness in fitting his people for heaven; but he will be the agent of gathering the wicked to punishment, who have rejected his strivings, and in their folly spoken against him (Luke xii. 10).

37. Who is another angel from "the altar"?—One of the ambassadors, or ministers, of the Gospel.

38. What is meant by his proceeding from "the altar"?—The allusion is to the altar of incense (Exod. xxx. 1-8), where the priest made intercession. So this minister is an attendant now in the sanctuary, keeping alive, by his preaching and prayers, the spiritual flame of the Gospel.

39. How had he power over fire?—By his prayers, to bring down the fire of the Holy Spirit.

40. What is meant by "the clusters of the vine of the earth"?—We consider the expression has reference to obstinate sinners, who reject the Holy Ghost and his strivings, and instead of bringing forth "grapes," they have brought forth "wild grapes" (Isa. v. 4).

41. How are "her grapes fully ripe"?—Ready for punishment, as the rejecters of God's Gospel and resisters of the Holy Spirit.

42. What is the meaning of the angel "gathering the vine of the earth"?—This means the wild vine, or wicked men, who bring forth fruit like the grapes of Sodom and the clusters of Gomorrah, grapes of gall and clusters that are bitter.

43. What are we to understand by the "winepress of the wrath of God"?—"The wrath of God" to be poured out on wicked men, who are to be trodden in his anger, as grapes in the winepress.

44. Why is the winepress represented "without the city"?—The allusion is probably to the place "without the gate" of the temple, where our Lord was crucified, to mark God's abhorrence of sin. (See Num. xix. 9; Heb. xiii. 11, 12.)

45. What is meant by the expression, "Blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse-bridles"?—It means, in all likelihood, that before Antichrist, and every false system which nourishes wicked men for the winepress, shall have been uprooted from "the earth," the blood of war will bespatter the horse-bridles of the combatants.

46. What is meant "by the space of 1600 furlongs"?—The whole length, typically, of Romish Christianity.

CHAPTER XV.

THIS chapter is an introduction to the pouring out of the seven vials on the great Antichrist, for its destruction and as a punishment for its sin.

VERSES 1-4.—*And I saw another sign in heaven . . . for thy judgments are made manifest.*

These verses contain—

I.—A description, or a vision, of the work the angels had to accomplish, namely, the destruction of Antichrist.

Its iniquity had now come to the full, and now is the time for its overthrow. The “seven angels” have charge of the “plagues,” or vials, in which the wrath of God is filled up. The angels here are, as before, made the executioners of his judgments. This is not the introduction of a new vision, but another scene in the vision John had already been contemplating. The angels are here, as before, messengers, or men, who are executing God’s will. This is a “sign, great and marvellous,” for it is no less than the beginning of the overthrow of Antichrist. And this is accomplished by the preaching of the Gospel by the “angels,” or messengers, which ushered in the Reformation. This was the first heavy blow, or plague, on Antichrist. It struck at the root of its pretensions and false miracles, and elevated the nations who embraced it far above Antichrist in science and arts and commerce and religion. In a word, it elevated them into a revival of the principles for which the witnesses contended and suffered; and the accomplishing of this, in itself, was a pouring out of the plague on Antichrist.

The “sign,” or vision, is seen “in the heaven” (Greek), for the angels had come “out of the temple

(verse 6), intimating, probably, that the Gospel is not confined to the temple, or the altar, but that the preaching of it throughout the world is the death-blow of the "Man of Sin." The "seven angels," or messengers, are a representative name for all Christ's faithful ministers, and the number, "seven," is a type of perfection for the completeness of the Gospel, which is the great subverter of Antichrist. As the "seven spirits" (Chap. i. 4) were the number of perfection for the Holy Spirit, so the number seven here, for that of the Gospel.

II.—The spectators of the work.

These were they who "had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name." They stood looking on and approving of the smiting of the system which had persecuted many of them to the death, for they gained the victory at death "through the blood of the Lamb."

1. Their position—"On the sea of glass mingled with fire." There is here, likely, an allusion to the Red Sea, standing "congealed" (Exod. xv. 8), when the children of Israel passed through. We have here—(1) The idea of safety. They stand now on the sea of glass, like the children of Israel on the bed of the Red Sea, beyond the power of their enemies and persecutors. While resting on the sea of glass for safety, they can see, mirrored through it, the fiery ordeal through which they passed in coming to this place. They are no longer on the world's bosom, tossed about with every tempest of persecution and trial, but now standing—which gives the idea of safety—"on the sea of glass," having "gotten the victory." The "sea mingled with fire," means the fiery ordeal through which they passed.

For an exposition of "the beast, and his image, and his mark, and the number of his name" (see on Chap. xiii. 11-17).

(2) The idea of victory. They get the victory over their enemies through the blood of the Lamb; and now they strike their harps in honour of it. The harps are called "the harps of God," because on them they sing his praises, and magnify his grace for the gift of his Son to

redeem them, and the gift of his Spirit to sanctify them and prepare them for heaven and such delightful exercise. Of course the "harps" are figurative, conveying the idea of the beautiful strains to set forth the praises of the Lamb.

(3) Their song. "They sing the song of Moses the servant of God . . . Lamb." As Moses and the children of Israel sang of the victory they obtained over the Egyptians at the Red Sea, so these here celebrate the victory they had obtained over their enemies. "The song of Moses" means that as he sang a song of victory, so do they. "The song of the Lamb" means the song in honour of the Lamb, through whom alone they had gotten the victory.

They are happy now. As the sea, when calm and smooth and clear, mirrors, like glass, the likeness of the clouds above it, so the sea of glass mirrors the beauty of God above them, that whether they look down or look up the sight is enrapturing. This swells the song of praise, and makes them strike the harps with the most intense delight. As it mirrors the beauty of God it must do the same of Christ and the Spirit, the one who redeemed them and the other who sanctifies them. This enhances their song and adds to their happiness. And when they consider the fiery ordeal through which they passed coming to this place, no wonder that they exclaim, in rapturous emotion, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty: just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints." Truly they may say, "Marvellous are God's works." It has been said that the redeemed will have three wonders in heaven. First, that they will see many there whom they did not expect to see. Second, that they will miss many whom they expected to see. And, third, that the greatest wonder will be to see themselves there. Each should put the question to himself and herself—Shall I be there? How am I to get there—a sinner by nature and a sinner by practice? We answer, through the blood of the Lamb and the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit. The blood gives a title to heaven, the Spirit a fitness for it.

The song is still continued. "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy."

The redeemed wonder that, after all Jesus Christ has done for a lost world, any should stay back from fearing and serving him. And they express the truth elsewhere stated in the Scriptures, that he only, of all the human race, was perfectly holy. The song has a sweet note of encouragement in it. "For all nations shall come and worship before thee." And though "all nations" now refuse to come and yield themselves to King Jesus, yet the time will come when "all nations shall come and worship before him." This period, likely, refers to the Millennium, when all shall know him, from the least to the greatest. The nations shall come to be a willing people in the day of God's power. The Holy Spirit, in effectual calling, will overcome their prejudices, and then the nations shall be seen hastening to him, as the "doves to their windows."

The song ends with the expression of a reason for this great influx into the Gospel kingdom. "Thy judgments are made manifest." The meaning of this seems to be that when God's judgments have been "made manifest," or felt, by the despisers of his law, Pagan Rome and Papal Rome,—the one feeling it by the overthrow of the Western Empire in A.D. 476, the other, by the Reformation of the 16th century,—men would learn to escape the Babylonian woe, and submit to King Jesus as their rightful sovereign.

VERSES 5-8.—*And after this I looked, and behold . . . seven angels were fulfilled.*

These verses suggest—

I.—The open temple.

"The temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened." The temple would appear to mean the visible Church, prominent before the people, as the temple in old times. As the temple of old was the complement of the "tabernacle of witness in the wilderness" (Acts vii. 44), containing the law and the shadowings of the Gospel, and was a visible witness of God's presence to the rebellious nations around; so the invisible Church now, embodying the Bible containing the Law and the Gospel, is a token to the heathen nations of God's presence in it. "Out of Zion shall go forth the Law and the Word of the

Lord from Jerusalem." (Isa. ii. 3). The "open temple" then means the Gospel, or the Bible, handed down open to all who wish to read. The Bible opens the whole treasury of the Church, and conveys the blessings of salvation to all mankind. No wonder that it is said, in the song just sung, "All nations shall come and worship before thee." When the Bible is made known to all lands, exposing the ignorance and error of superstition, then there is a preparation for the Millennium and the universal worship of the Messiah. In 2 Kings, chap. xxiii., when Josiah read in the ears of all the people the book of the covenant, there was a great reformation—the vessels of Baal were brought out from the temple of the Lord and the idolatrous worship was put down. The book of the law, or covenant, was the key that opened the temple and exposed the evils of idolatry. At the French Revolution, in A.D. 1792, religion in France and in this country wore a very dismal aspect. But the London Missionary Society was established in A.D. 1795; the Tract Society, in 1799; the British and Foreign Bible Society, in 1804; the American Missionary Society, in 1810; the German Missionary Society, in 1824. These all opened the temple of knowledge, or "the tabernacle of testimony," to the nations; for the Bible is so, wherever it has free access; and since that time missionary enterprise has gone on apace. "The temple" is represented "in heaven;" for it is only so far as anything is of heavenly origin, even on the earth, that it can accomplish any good. The Bible then, brought out from under the ban, where it had been kept for ages, shows men that they are sinners, and points them to the Lamb of God "who taketh away the sin of the world."

II.—The dress of the angels.

1. They are "clothed in pure and white linen." This denotes their purity. "The seven angels" here represent the preachers of the Gospel; and seven, as before stated, implies the number of perfection. Nothing is needed, then, to be added to the preaching of the Gospel. It is the sovereign remedy to heal all the spiritual maladies of the world. It is "the power of God unto salvation to every

one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16). True, it does not include Temperance Societies and other agencies for the amelioration of society and the good of churches, but these without it would be comparatively impotent for good, and of themselves would never save the soul. It directs and controls them all, and aids them for good. These angels have "the seven plagues." This is the commission of the "angels," or preachers of the Gospel, to pour out these plagues, or "vials" of wrath, on Antichrist, denouncing the woes that will come on it for its sin. As the angels are seven, so the plagues are seven, implying the completeness of the destruction that is to fall on Romanism and Mahometanism and every other anti-Christian system. The "angels" are armed with their authority, and they will use it when the time comes for the pouring out of the plagues. The soldier gets his fire-lock and his other arms when he enters the ranks, but he only uses them for warfare when the war comes.

2. They are "girded with the golden girdles." They had these on their "breasts." This was the dress of the high priest when he ministered in the holy place (Exod. chap. xxviii.), and indicates their fitness for the work. As the "white linen" indicated their purity, this indicates their fitness. The "golden girdles" showed the richness of their dress. It is of no mean material, but of the most costly texture. This clothing has a tendency to recommend their mission, as they are of a type with the high priest of old. The "golden girdles," perhaps, suggested another idea—that of never corroding or decaying. As the "white linen" implies "the righteousness of the saints," &c., the righteousness of Christ made over to them; and the "golden girdles," as recommending their mission, should teach ministers that they should keep their garments always white and let the world see no defect in their calling, or spiritual clothing, with which they are invested.

III.—Their artillery.

This consists in "seven golden vials full of the wrath of God." These "vials" are much the same, or, perhaps, exactly the same, as the "seven" plagues in the preceding

verse, only they are here called "golden." The epithet "golden" is applied to them, in all likelihood, in reference to the "golden censer (Chap. viii. 3-5), which was "filled with fire and cast into the earth. As that occurred in connexion with the sounding of the "seven trumpets by the seven angels," when severe plagues were inflicted on Pagan Rome; so here a similar scene may be expected to occur in connexion with the infliction of severe "plagues" on Papal Rome. The censers were of gold, on the golden altar of incense, in the holy place, to denote the purity of the intercession which came up from it. And here the vessels, or the "vials full of the wrath of God," are "golden" also, in all probability to denote the wrath without mixture that is to be poured out on all rejecters of Christ's Gospel on the earth.

1. From whom did the angels get the "vials"? From "one of the four beasts," or living creatures, as mentioned in Chap. iv. 6. Why one of these is commissioned to give the vials to the "angels," or messengers, we cannot tell, except that as these were near the throne and ready to execute God's behests, this commission from God is put into his hands. It may be that as the "four beasts," or living creatures, are the representatives of the ministers on earth, it is given to one of them to reveal these things to his kindred there, fulfilling their mission.

2. Why are they poured out? To fulfil prophecy in inflicting judicial punishment, in the shape of spiritual blindness, on the despisers of God's laws, as was on the Jews of old. "God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this day" (Rom. xi. 8). He has poured out judgments, temporal or spiritual, on the despisers of his Word, for he is a holy God. Mark his judgments on the antediluvian world—on Sodom and Gomorrah—on the Jews again and again. And "he liveth for ever and ever" to vindicate his own justice, that if he do not inflict the vials of his wrath here, he has all eternity to do his work. Let "sinners in Zion" be afraid, for he is a God that judgeth in the earth and in the heaven too.

IV.—What hinders man from entering into the temple?

1. It is “filled with smoke from the Lord God.” There is a reference here, doubtless, to the high priest going into the holy of holies on the great day of atonement, when he took a handful of incense and put it on the coals on the censer (Levit. xvi. 12, 13), and the cloud filled the most holy place. “The temple being filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power,” seems to mean the incense of prayer coming up from the ministers of the sanctuary, under the New Testament dispensation, fills the Church with precious odour, and comes up to the mercy-seat in behalf of the people. It is only “from the glory of God, and his power,” that men are thus permitted to approach him and to intercede with him in behalf of sinners, and preach the Gospel of his power for the conversion of sinners and the edification of saints.

“And no man was able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.” Notwithstanding the praying and preaching of Christ’s faithful ministers, men were so prejudiced with judicial blindness and enamoured of Antichrist, that they refused to enter the temple of prayer, but persisted in their opposition to all Gospel invitations and entreaties until the plagues had done their deadly work. Who looks at the spirit of Antichrist still, but sees it, as ever, callous to the claims of a winning, soothing Christianity, and hostile to every movement apart from its own dictates? When these fearful judgments in the text are poured out on it, it may be humbled and willing to enter into the temple and receive its portion of heavenly blessings. These judgments are being largely poured out on it since the Reformation, and doubtless will, till it is humbled at the feet of Immanuel, and brought to exclaim—“Guilty! guilty!” and urge the one plea—“Mercy! mercy!” In all probability they will have been all poured out at the Millennium, “when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Let us pray and wait in faith for that time.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XV.

1. Who are the seven angels?—The ministers or messengers proclaiming the Gospel, which is like a plague upon the great Antichrist.

2. Why are the plagues called "the seven last plagues?"—As seven is a perfect number, so the Gospel will be complete for the overthrowing of this system.

3. How is the wrath of God "filled up" in the plagues?—Because in the preaching of the Gospel, when the plan of salvation, through faith in a crucified Redeemer, is made known, the wrath of God is revealed "against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."

4. Why is the "sign" called great and marvellous?—Because it is the beginning of the overthrow of Antichrist, by the preaching of the Gospel at the Reformation.

5. Why seven angels?—A representative number of perfection for all Christ's faithful ministers, whose preaching throughout the world is the death-blow to the "Man of Sin."

6. What is meant by the "sea of glass mingled with fire?"—This would seem to indicate the security of these in heaven, as of the children of Israel when they stood on the bed of the Red Sea; and here they see mirrored, as it were, the fiery ordeal through which they passed in coming to it, and the glory of God surrounding them.

7. What is meant by "the beast, and his image, and mark, and the number of his name?"—(See answers on closing verses of Chapter xiii.)

8. What are we to understand by the harps of God?—As the harp has a sweet sound, so symbolically the saints are represented as singing on the harps the song of redeeming love.

9. Why is Moses introduced here?—As Moses, the leader of the Israelites, sang the song of victory at the Red Sea, so here the saints sing the song of victory over all their enemies, through the blood of the Lamb.

10. What is meant by the expression, "Thy judgments are made manifest"?—That his judgments have been felt by Pagan Rome, by the overthrow of the Western Empire, and by Papal Rome, by its check at the Reformation.

11. What is meant by the "temple of the tabernacle of the testimony being opened?"—The visible Church opened before the people.

12. Why called "the tabernacle of the testimony"?—As the tabernacle of old contained the Law, as a testimony of God's presence; so the visible Church now contains the Gospel, as a token, or testimony, to the heathen of God's presence in it.

13. Why is the temple of the tabernacle represented "in heaven"?—Because it is only so far as anything on the earth is of heavenly origin that it can accomplish any good.

14. What is meant by "the pure and white linen," as the dress of the "angels," or preachers?—The white robes of a Saviour's righteousness, and indicates their purity.

15. Why are the angels, or ministers, represented as coming "out of the temple"?—Coming out of the Church, as its accredited messengers.

16. Why "their breasts girded with golden girdles"?—Corresponding to the dress of the high priest, when he ministered in the holy place (Exod. chap. xxviii.), and indicating their fitness for the work.

17. What are we to understand by these "vials"?—They have the same meaning as the plagues in the preceding verse.

18. Why are they represented as "golden"?—To show, in all probability, the purity of the wrath of God, or the wrath without mixture, to be poured out on Papal Rome and all the rejecters of his Gospel.

19. Why are the vials handed to the angels by "one of the four beasts"?—It may be that, because these were the representatives of the ministers, it is given to them to reveal these things to their kindred on the earth.

20. What is the meaning of the "temple being filled with smoke"?—As the holy of holies was filled thus when the high priest went into it on the great day of atonement (Levit. xvi. 12, 13), typifying the intercession made, so the incense of prayer, coming up by the ministers of the Church now, fills it with precious odour, and ascends to the mercy-seat in heaven in behalf of the people.

21. How was "no man able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues were fulfilled"?—Men were so blinded by Papal zeal that they refused to enter the Christian Church till these plagues were poured out on their system, and humbled them so as to receive the Gospel by the power of the Spirit of God.

CHAPTER XVI.

THIS chapter gives a description of the pouring out of the "vials," and of the plagues, and what happened as the result. The vials are the wrath of God for sin which now fell on Rome and every Antichristian system. The seven trumpets referred to the woes poured out on Pagan Rome and a corrupt Church, and the rise of Antichrist. The seven vials refer to the fall of the latter. The vials fall not only on the Antichristian system, but on everything pertaining to it.

VERSES 1-7.—*And I heard a great voice out of the temple . . . even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.*

The "voice out of the temple" here, cannot be the same as that of the angel in Chap. xiv. 15, for there it is the voice of the angel, crying to him that sat on the cloud—"Thrust in thy sharp sickle;" but here it is "a great voice" to the angels themselves. It appears to be the same as that of Chap. x. 4, the "voice from heaven," or the voice of the Holy Spirit, as we think, commanding the angels, or ministers of the Gospel, as to the mission they had to accomplish. It is the Holy Spirit who qualifies ministers for their work, and gives them the gifts and graces suitable for their work; and, as such, he has a right to direct them when to act and where to act.

"The vials of the wrath of God," mean the trials, or plagues, that are now about to fall "upon the earth," or the Antichristian world, for their sins; and the preaching of the Gospel, or unfolding the mysteries of the Bible, which Antichrist so long withstood, and put under the ban, was one of the greatest plagues that ever fell on the Papal system. It struck at the very root and the very vitals of the system, for it proclaimed the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of sinners, to the exclusion of all other

mediators, and his obedience unto death as the only ground of the sinner's salvation. The vials seem to have some connexion with the trumpets which represented the rise of Antichrist. As the one represents its rise, so the other its fall; and as it rose gradually, so it falls.

1. What is meant by the pouring out of the first vial on the earth? The preaching of the Gospel on the Roman Catholic system. And who is meant by the "first" angel? We think Luther, the great herald of the Reformation, and ushering it in. The "noisome and grievous sore" upon certain parties, is the affliction that fell on the Roman clergy consequent on the preaching of the Gospel. The Gospel takes all the power from man, makes him only the earthen vessel, and gives all the power to God, who provided a Saviour, sent him, and accepts his sacrifice in behalf of sinners, and shows that it is the Holy Spirit's work to apply the redemption that Christ has purchased to the souls of sinners who believe. As to the "mark of the beast," and the worshippers of "his image" (see, for explanation, on Chap. xiii. 14-17).

2. What is meant by "the second angel pouring out his vial on the sea"? The protest of the Protestants, we think, at the Diet of Worms, in A.D. 1529, against the doctrines and superstitions of the Roman Catholic Church. It is said the vial fell "on the sea," meaning the whole surface of the Romish system. The first vial affected the life of the system; the second, the external appearance of the system. The superstitions and doctrines are not to go on unchallenged as before. These doctrines are questioned; and the outward aspect of the system feels the stroke also. The tide does not run so smoothly as before; it has got a new element to contend with. As a consequence—"it became as the blood of a dead man"—that is, congealed and cold. It wanted that free current as hitherto. "And every living soul died in the sea." The meaning of this appears to be, that as the vitals of the system were affected by the first plague, or the preaching of the Gospel, and the doctrines and superstitions by the second, or the protest,—every soul in it "died," or got its death-blow from this out. It is no longer the arbiter of nations, no longer the dominant power, doing as it pleases without let or

hindrance. It has now got its death-blow at the Reformation; the lance has been let into its life-blood, and it will die by-and-by, as the power of the Gospel strikes at its vitals. Who is meant by "the second angel"? This means the progressive preaching of the Gospel, we think, by faithful ministers, and not any particular personage. For while we represent Luther as the first angel, or messenger, it was only because he took the initiative at the Reformation.

3. What is meant by the pouring out of the third "vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters"? We think it means the suppression of colleges and religious houses, the sequestering, or alienation, of the property of religious orders, as has lately been the case in Italy and Germany. Thus the "vial" was poured out on the seats of learning, represented by the "rivers and fountains of waters." Many of these have been lately suppressed in the countries referred to, which is a severe blow, a plague, or "vial," on the Papacy.

"And they became blood." The figure seems to be taken from *Exod. vii. 19, 20*, where the river became blood, as a plague on the Egyptians. But is there any new idea here, from the former verse, where the sea "became as the blood of a dead man"? We think not; but just as the doctrines and superstitions became cold and congealed like blood, so here, the fountains and springs from which the system derived its life and vigour became inoperative, wanting the free current, as in the former verse. Though the former verse has—"It became as blood," and this, "became blood," yet the meaning, we think, remains the same, partaking of the nature of blood when it is cold and clotted—inoperative.

A question arises—What led to the suppression of colleges and seats of learning lately, and the alienation of endowments of religious houses? The unification of Italy under Victor Emmanuel, the Franco-Prussian war, and the Infallibility of the Pope. The war withdrew the French troops from Rome and enabled Victor Emmanuel to become sole king, when many of the funds for learning became appropriated to the crown. The Infallibility of the Pope led to the expulsion of the Jesuits from Germany,

and consequently the appropriation of many of the funds also for learning and religious purposes to the State. The Roman Pastoral of January, 1873, mourns over the fact of the Italian State refusing to allow the Old Catholics to be excommunicated; the usurpation by it of parishes in Switzerland; the expulsion of religious orders; the desecration of cemeteries by civil authorities in Belgium; the impoverishment of the clergy in Spain. Surely all these taken together would be a plague on the system, like the river Nile becoming blood to the Egyptians.

"The third angel" is still the preacher of the Gospel, which "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16). This may not be any particular minister; but his message is still a protest against superstition and false doctrine. And it was likely the effects of a preached Gospel on statesmen and nations, though not directly but indirectly, that led to the checking of the pride of the Romish system, and rendered it cold and congealed like "blood of a dead man."

Who is "the angel of the waters"? The same, we think, as the last angel, who poured out his vial "upon the rivers and fountains of water." He is the representative of a faithful minister. Looking at the effects of a preached Gospel, and its withering influence on the Church of Rome, he bursts forth in a song of jubilee, like Moses on the other side of the Red Sea,—*"Thou art righteous Lord . . . because thou hast judged thus."* That is to say, that God acted righteously in dealing out retributive justice to the enemies of his Church, and in thus judging them—turning their rivers and fountains into blood. Then the angel assigns the reason for this in verse 6—*"For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink."* How was this? These colleges and religious houses, now sequestered, had been the means of instigating kings and rulers to undertake war against God's saints: as witness the wars in Germany, and the cruelties of the Duke of Alva under Philip II. of Spain, in the Netherlands, in A.D. 1567; and the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day in Paris, in A.D. 1672; and the Dragonnades in France also, in A.D. 1685, under Louis XIV., when he revoked the Edict of Nantz of

A.D. 1598, giving toleration to the Protestants. And now they have got "blood to drink." "For they are worthy." That is, that they deserve this punishment. Retributive justice has been measured out to them, in that the fountains and rivers which instigated to these cruelties and to the shedding of so much blood, have got their power so paralyzed and effete that they can add no refreshing life to the system of which they are a part; and the consequence is, it languishes and becomes cold and congealed like the "blood of a dead man."

"And I heard another out of the altar say, even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments." "Another," means another angel. And who is he? We believe, from his position, "out of the altar," he is the Lord Jesus Christ, the great high priest, presenting at the "altar" the incense of his intercession (Chap. viii. 3) "with the prayers of all saints." And he confirms the sentence of the angel in a preceding verse—that God is righteous in taking vengeance and pouring out judgments on the oppressors and persecutors of his people.

VERSES 8-II.—*And the fourth angel poured out his vial . . . and repented not of their deeds.*

The first question that arises here is—Who is "the fourth angel"? We answer, the Gospel minister still, whose preaching is such a plague to the Romish system. The second question is—Who is meant by "the sun" on whom it is poured out? We think the late Napoleon Bonaparte, who was made a prisoner by the Germans at the battle of Sedan, in A.D. 1870, and whose kingdom was prostrated with him to a large extent. He was the high imperial "sun," the very bulwark of the Papal system, to whom it looked up, and from whom it received much of its light and heat, or temporal prestige. He supported the temporal power of the Papacy, which was tottering for years, by French bayonets; but, when he was made a prisoner, not only was his own kingdom humbled, but the temporal power of the Papacy, by the removal of the French troops from Rome, fell with a crash. Surely this

was a sore plague on this great political "sun" and the whole Papal system which looked up to him for protection. Another question arises--How did the Gospel ministry succeed in casting down this great political "sun"? Not directly, but indirectly; for it was the preaching of the Gospel in Germany at the Reformation, and since, which led to the superior intelligence of the Germans, and which was the most potent factor of their success in casting down the political "sun."

"And power was given unto him to scorch men with fire." The same idea is carried out here as in the preceding clause. It was the superior intelligence of the Germans, fired with Reformation principles, that over-matched the French, and enabled them, by their superior artillery, to "scorch" with such scathing "fire" the ranks of their opponents in the late war. It is asked--Does the preaching of the Gospel on this principle foster a spirit of war? No, it fosters a spirit of peace; but if war is forced on a nation where the truths of the Gospel are imbibed, its superior intelligence from Bible teaching, coupled with a refusal to be brought again under the yoke of false doctrine and superstition, makes it resist the enemy, generally, and, for the most part, gives it the advantage over him.

"And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues." This has been exemplified in the late Franco-German war to the very letter. Men were scorched with the artillery of the German fire. It was very galling and destructive, and burnt like a very fire into the ranks of the enemy. This led Socialists and Infidels, and other ungodly soldiers, to "blaspheme the name of God," who permitted this plague of destruction and death to fall upon them.

"And they repented not to give him glory." Notwithstanding these plagues, which brought such disaster on them, they were not humbled, and refused to give God glory. So it is with wicked men, no amount of mere punishment, as such, humbles them and leads them to repentance. It only makes the ungodly and seducers to wax worse and worse. Affliction and trial make good

men more humble and more holy; they make bad men more hardened than before. What a lesson to men, to see that their trials are sanctified, and that instead of hardening them, they lead them to repent anew!

"And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast." We think this refers to the overthrow of the temporal power of the Papacy, represented here by "the seat of the beast." It certainly was a plague to Rome to have this taken away, and to be bereft of the grandeur which it formerly conferred—a seat among temporal princes. At one time the Pope, as a temporal prince, made laws for the world. How galling to Rome must it be for him to be reduced to a cypher among the potentates of the world, and to have his former prestige taken away!

"And his kingdom was full of darkness." One of the plagues of Egypt was literal darkness. This is political darkness, the light of the Papacy, or its head, to make laws for the world, being long since extinguished. Rome's kingdom is "full of political darkness." Hers is the humiliation that she is brought down from her high throne, fulminating laws and bulls for the world, to sit as it were solitary in the dust, and be exposed to this degradation before the nations for whom she formerly made laws.

"And they gnawed their tongues for pain." This means, that when the Reformation set in,—when the power of Rome's authority to make laws for the world was broken,—when civil and religious liberty was established by William III., at the Revolution in A.D. 1688; and especially when the States of the Church, forming the temporal power, were wrested from the Popedom, and Protestant Evangelicals admitted into Rome, it was a sore plague to the Papacy, and its adherents "gnawed their tongues for pain." No wonder that they did so, to see ten Evangelical denominations of Protestants in the heart of their city, and under the very eye of the Pope! Changed days, from the time when she made laws for the world, and that at his spiritual nod princes quailed before him. Pope Zachary took the kingdom of France from Childeric III. and gave it to Pepin, the mayor of his palace, in the eighth century. Gregory VII., commonly called Hilde-

brand, excommunicated Henry IV., Emperor of Germany, and absolved his subjects from their oath of allegiance. Pope Adrian IV. compelled the Emperor, Frederic Barbarossa, to hold his stirrup when he mounted his horse. And Pope Pius V. published a bull for the purpose of depriving Queen Elizabeth of her dominions.—(*Bagot's Protestant Catechism.*)

“And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores.” They speak reproachfully and irreverently against God for allowing such disasters, as they called the Protestant Reformation and the invasion of the States of the Church, and other ruins in their ranks, to take place.

“And repented not of their deeds.” Though humbled they are not penitent, and this paved the way for their final overthrow. If the goodness of God, even in his forbearance and long suffering, do not lead a man, or a system, to repentance, this gentle dealing will only harden him in it (Rom. ii. 3-6) for his final ruin.

Lessons.—1. Every supporter of a persecuting system against the truth shall be humbled. Who could believe a few years ago that Napoleon III. of France, the eldest son of the Papacy, and the supporter of its cause in Rome with French bayonets, would be so soon hurled from his throne? Yet so it has turned out, and may be a warning to others. 2. Every cruel system itself will be cast down sooner or later. Rome long persecuted; for the last 600 years, commencing with the cruelties of Pope Innocent III. against the Albigenes, in A.D. 1213, it is calculated that she has put to death fifty millions of Protestants, or about 85,000 a year! The temporal power was overthrown in A.D. 1870. Mahometanism is now being overthrown in its temporal affairs also, and the time is coming when the cry will be heard—“Babylon the great is fallen! is fallen!” and when Antichrist, under every aspect, will be completely overthrown. 3. A persecuting spirit arises from our fallen nature. “The carnal mind is enmity against God” (Rom. viii. 7), and against everything that is like God. Cicero, the moralist, makes revenge a virtue. This is heathenism. Wherever the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ is, it is—“Love your enemies, bless them

that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you" (Matt. v. 44). This is the evidence of a change of heart and the fruit of the new birth. A change of heart must have a change of life.

VERSES 12-16.—*And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates . . . Armageddon*

The drying up of the Euphrates, we think, means the overthrow of the Turkish power and Empire. It has long stood in the way of the progress of the Gospel. Why are we to understand that by the "river Euphrates" is meant the Turkish power? Because that at this place the Turkish power took its rise. The key to this meaning seems to be found in Chap. ix. 14, of this book, where the four angels were "bound in the great river Euphrates." Bagdad, on the Euphrates, where the tempest-restraining angels (Chap. vii. 1) were caused to stop for a time, was the place where the Saracenic army was broken, but from which these angels emerged, after a pause (Chap. ix. 15), when the Turkish judgments burst forth in a new form, under Togrul Beg, governor of Mecca, and Alf Arslan, his general, called "the valiant lion," who crossed the Euphrates, and with an immense army of Turkish cavalry invaded Christendom, and carried fire and sword wherever he went. As the power of Turkey was checked for a time on the Euphrates, this is probably an earnest that it will be finally broken up here by the power of a preached Gospel. Euphrates and Turkey being so identified, the drying up, or waning, of the Turkish power, may be taken to represent, in symbolic language, the drying up of the river. It has been drying up, or decaying, year after year, since A.D. 1820; and lately, since the treaties of the great European powers, slice after slice has been taken from it and given to other nations, and itself largely put under the protectorate of England. Its power now is little more than nominal, and it may not be long till, in the providence of God, it ceases to be an Empire.

1. "The kings of the East," mean the Jews, because they were the first peculiarly-favoured people. God chose:

them from among other nations, and conferred on them privileges which he gave to no other people. To them "were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. iii. 2). Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, was called from Ur of the Chaldees, a land lying in the East, between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, and hence, as the Jews had the prestige over other nations, they may be called "the kings of the East."

The water of the river being dried up, has probably a reference to the turning aside of the channel of the Euphrates by Cyrus, when he went up and took the city of Babylon, and surprised Belshazzar in his drunken revel. (Daniel, chap. v.) It is recorded in history, that Cyrus caused the bed of the river to be turned aside, and this made way for his army to go in and invade the city. He took the kingdom, and transferred it to his uncle Darius (Dan. v. 31). Likely John had this before his mind when he spake of the drying up of the Euphrates, this being typical of the political drying up of the Turkish Empire, which would prepare the way for the return of the Jews to Palestine. Two things have kept them back for centuries from returning—the idolatry of the Romish Church in the West, and Mahometanism in the East. The distorted view of Christianity which they have seen in the one, has been the great barrier to their conversion in the West, and the oppressive and fiendish power of the other, has been the great barrier to their conversion in the East. Since these two powers have received their death-blow, by the overthrow of the temporal power of the Pope, and the subjugation of Turkey by the Russian Empire, then may we expect a great revival of Christianity among the Jews, the return to their own land, and, finally, their conversion to Christ, whom their fathers have crucified.

The "unclean spirits like frogs," proceeding "out of the mouth of the dragon . . . the beast . . . and the false prophet," mean the evil principles, or false doctrine, emanating from Pagan Rome first, and from Papal Rome next, and from Mahometanism in the last place. Why are they likened to "frogs"? The word for "frogs," in the original Greek, means also a swelling on the tongue; and as the tongue would give a foul sound, so these false

doctrines, by way of metaphor, emanating from the false systems mentioned, would swell out into tremendous dimensions, which they did. Pagan Rome vested all religious power in the Emperor, called Pontifex Maximus, or the greatest power; Papal Rome, in the Pope; and Mahometanism, in the false prophet, Mahomet. The doctrines, or principles, are here called "the spirits of devils," or demons, "working miracles." They must be bad spirits when they are identified with "devils." If so, a question arises—How are they able to work miracles? The miracles here attributed to them are the same as those ascribed to the second beast, in Chap. xiii. 13, 14. There they are described, and as there we noticed that the "fire from heaven" was feigned fire, so here the miracles are spurious also, like those of the magicians of Egypt.

These "spirits of devils go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world." That is to say, the evil principles emanating from these false sources stalk abroad through the earth, trying to allure kings and their subjects throughout the world. Pagan Rome influenced by her sorceries all the great men of the then known world. Papal Rome, through the Jesuits, for generations has been trying to influence the great ones of the earth. And Mahometanism, through its high-sounding titles and grand viziers, has tried to dazzle and entrap the mighty, and, if possible, to bring all within its influence. The object of all this catering and proselytizing is "to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty," called the battle of "Armageddon." The key to the meaning of "that great day," we think, may be found in the Gospel dispensation, which is the "day" of the truth of the Gospel, against the false principles and false doctrines of the three systems already mentioned. "Armageddon," means the mountain of Megiddo; and as the Israelites, under Deborah and Barak, gained a complete victory over Sisera, general of the king of Jabin's army, at the waters of Megiddo, or Kishon (Judg. v. 19-21), so shall the true Israel gain a complete victory over all these false systems, and every other false system.

A question arises here—Where is the place of Armageddon? or where is the battle to be fought? We answer,

wherever there is a remnant of false doctrine, or of any false system, in our opinion there the Gospel has to do battle to subvert it, and strike at its root. First, it is to strike at the root of these three systems—of the Dragon and the Beast and the False Prophet; and then at any other form of error which is more or less a variation of one or other of them. And now there is a note of warning sounded to prepare for the struggle—"Behold I come as a thief," that is to say, Christ is to come to wage this great battle suddenly and unexpectedly, "as a thief," surprising the people with his presence, as the bridegroom the ten virgins. He is the great actor himself in the battle, or the chief general; and while he has the ministers of the Gospel as his officers, and the mighty army of his followers to act under them, yet all the power is to be ascribed to him, directing the host, and making them powerful to conquer. He is the same who appears in Chap. vi. 2, on a white horse, and went forth conquering and to conquer; and in Chap. xix. 11, in the same capacity, waging the same war; and his name is called there the Word of God (verse 13). And while his suddenness is here represented "as a thief," we are not to infer, when it says so, that he must be present in person to fight the battle. True, he must be present spiritually and at the head of the army on white horses (Chap. xix. 14); but his personal reign is not necessary for the overthrow of the false systems of the world, as is plain from Chap. xix. 15, for "out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations." This is the Gospel, or the sword of the Spirit, with which he is to accomplish his great victory. We see then that it is the power of the Gospel, wielded by the sword of the Spirit, proceeding out of "Christ's mouth," which is to gain the great battle and to bring every thought "into obedience to him." He is the Head of the Church as well as of his own spiritual armies, and as long as he occupies that position, whether absent or present, he can make the battle a success.

Then he pronounces a blessing on him looking out for his coming to the conflict, and "keeping his garments" from the defilement of sin, that his nakedness may not

appear and that his "shame" may not be seen. This means, we think, that the great bulk of the people are indifferent to the great battle, whether it be fought or not, whether error and false systems be rooted from the world or not. And is it not so? Do we not see the vast majority of mankind so taken up with their own selfish interests, that they seem to be indifferent whether the world improves or not, whether Romanism and Mahometanism and Hindooism be eradicated or not. And no wonder that Christ commends any who are alive to the true interests of religion, and are on the look out for signs of improvement and Christ's coming in the mighty power of the Gospel,—for "the Gospel is the power of salvation to every one who believeth,"—to the overthrow of whatsoever systems have kept the world so long in bondage and thralldom under Satan's sway.

He is not only watching, but "keeping his garments," that is, shunning all appearance of evil and contact with the defilement of the world. He is one of Christ's believing ones, saved not only from hell, but saved from sin. Christ's "name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." He who has got the garment of a Saviour's righteousness on him by faith (Rom. iii. 22), is jealous of the purity of that garment, and will not defile it by coming in contact with evil. We are spiritually naked by nature (Chap. iii. 17); Christ's righteousness clothes us, that our "shame" may not appear. If we are without this garment the world will soon see our defect, and Jesus Christ himself will say to us, with withering sarcasm, as he did to the guest at the marriage feast, "How camest thou in hither, not having on the wedding garment?" It is those who are thus clothed, and who are watching for Christ's coming, he "gathers together" for the warfare in the battle of Armageddon, or the battle against error. It is only soldiers that are proved and equipped that are fit for active human warfare; and so here, it is only those who are thus prepared whom he engages in the great spiritual conflict.

It is worthy of note here, that it is not merely the ministers whom he engages in the conflict, but every one

that "watcheth and keepeth his garments." Every redeemed soul then has a work to do, as well as the minister of the Gospel, and each is to play his part under the great Captain of our Salvation, in striking at the root of every false system and trying to bring the world under the dominion of King Jesus. Again, as the victory of Deborah and Barak at Megiddo was final—the Canaanites no more encountering the Israelites—so these false systems, of which we have been speaking, shall be completely and finally overthrown by the sword of truth, wielded by the omnipotent power of the Spirit.

VERSES 17, 18.—*And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air . . . and there was a great earthquake . . . so mighty an earthquake and so great.*

1. What is meant by the vial being poured out "into the air"? The air, in Scripture, is represented as Satan's territory—"the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. ii. 2), and the vial poured out into it is, we think, science invading his territory. Hitherto, like a strong man armed, he had kept his palace, imposed on the people, and blinded them by many vain delusions, which science has exposed and exploded. He is now no longer master of the fort, for electricity has entered his region and struck at the root of his sophistries. It has towered as high as his kingdom, he is not there what he once was. Like a wire-puller behind the screen, he imposed many frauds and false tricks and feigned miracles on his votaries, but science has exploded many of them, and has made him uneasy in his stronghold. With the Gospel below, exposing the false principles and false doctrines of Antichrist, and electricity above, yoking lightning to her car and exposing the sophistries of Satan, well may the "great voice out of the temple," doubtless the voice of the Holy Spirit, exclaim, "It is done."

2. What is meant by the expression, "It is done"? It is all up with the great Antichrist and the false systems below, and Satan's imposition above. "The kingdoms of this world" are soon to "become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." The "little book," of the tenth

Chapter, has described the great Antichrist's rise and progress and universal dominion, but now he is to be brought down; his dominion "is done," and another kingdom, that of Christ, is to be erected on its ruins. The Spirit that emanates from "the temple, from the throne" of God, and lights on his messengers who go forth to make war in the battle between truth and error, echoes forth as they wield the sword of the Spirit so valiantly, "It is done." Antichrist is overthrown and his pretensions exploded, Jesus Christ shall soon be all in all in his own kingdom. False systems cannot stand the onslaught of the Gospel, accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit, and seconded by the researches of science. And even Satan in the air, with such a sap and mine, feels his throne beginning to totter. Long ago, Rome silenced Galileo for asserting the movement of the earth around the sun; but, forced to yield against his will, he muttered, rising from his stool of recantation, "It moves still." The same system, with others of a kindred nature, would fain still put a ban on the onward and upward march of intellect, but the tide is running so high that the water-logged ship can no longer remain on the sand-banks; she must move with the current, though it should drive her to pieces on the rocks ahead.

3. What is meant by the "voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and earthquake"? As there were voices, "the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud" (Exod. xix. 16), at the ushering in of Judaism and the decay of the Patriarchial economy; and a "great earthquake" (Matt. xxvii. 51) at the fall of Judaism and the ushering in of the Christian economy; so here, at the fall of these false systems and the inauguration of the Millennium, we have the analogy carried out on the same grand scale, in the thundering voices of preachers, calling on sinners to flee out of Babylon "that they be not partakers of her sins, and that they receive not of her plagues." In the lightnings is manifested the power of Christ's Spirit in the preaching of the Gospel, with a vividness which none can gainsay; and the "great earthquake," means a shaking of public opinion, generated by such forces, condemning the false and approving of the true. And truly it may be

said of this earthquake, it was such "as was not since men were on the earth," for hitherto their minds were not enlightened, or prepared, for such a change of sentiment.

VERSES 19-21.—*And the great city was divided into three parts . . . for the plagues thereof was exceeding great.*

1. The "city was divided into three parts." This is the result, or great change, of public opinion; and as Babylon fell, and Jerusalem was trodden "under foot" of the Gentiles (Chap. xi. 2), so here Rome, the spiritual Babylon, is to be divided into "three parts" of political, or religious divisions,—the Ultramontanes supporting Papal infallibility; the Italians, the temporal power of the Pope; and the French, the purely spiritual power. And it has come to this, notwithstanding the dogma of Papal infallibility ratified by the Council in A.D. 1870 (for some of the adherents of the Papacy still cling to the purely spiritual power, as the Old Catholics) that the "city" here, represents the whole Papal system. And these are the three opinions which the "earthquake" of public opinion has engendered.

2. "The cities of the nations fell." These, we think, were other false systems, as Mahometanism, Hindooism, &c., falling immediately after Rome and the Romish system. Its overthrow prepares the way for their overthrow, for it has been the great barrier of the Gospel in the Western world, which is yet to subdue the false systems of the East; and, when it is removed, the Gospel will have free course and be glorified. Even as it is, with the partial shaking of the Romish system, and schools opening up in Mahometan countries, the way is being prepared for their fall and final overthrow.

3. "Great Babylon came up in remembrance before God." As Babylon fell, so Rome, of which Babylon was the type, shall fall also. It was predicted of Babylon (Isa. xiii. 19), that she would fall and never be inhabited again. This has been fulfilled to the very letter, as travellers who have been on the ground have told us. So Rome shall yet fall, yea, share a similar fate, and there shall be pronounced over her, "Babylon the great is fallen! is

fallen ! " She has come "in remembrance before God to give her the cup of the wine of his wrath," that is, to mete out the punishment which is due to her for the blood of the saints which she shed. Here is retributive justice. She may have been allowed a long time to pass ; but at length she "came in remembrance before God." Let sinners and false systems remember, that though they pass for a time unpunished, yet retributive justice will overtake them in God's own time and in his own way. A just God holds the cup of wrath in his hand, and he will cause them to drink of its contents when he thinks proper, unless their sins are repented of, and faith exercised in the blood of Christ, which can alone atone for their guilt.

"The cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath" refers, as most commentators think, to the drugged potions given to malefactors before their execution. [This stupefied their senses and prepared them for a quieter death. So here, the "cup of wrath" is measured out to the false system to prepare the way for her execution. Her senses have been so drugged and stupefied by false doctrine and superstition and false miracles, that she has lost all ability to discern between true and false. Because she rejected the truth, God has given her over to numbness of spirit, and she is now prepared for the last alternative.

4. "And every island fled away." Taking the great city to mean Rome, or the Romish system, and the "cities of the nations" (verse 19), to mean Mahometanism and Heathenism, &c., then "every island" would mean the dependencies on these systems. As islands, the small parts of a kingdom, or empire, are dependent for their government and protection on the nation to which they belong, and when the nation falls they fall ; so here, every dependency on these great systems must fall with the systems themselves. "And the mountains were not found." The mountains are often a protection to a city, or country, as the mountains round about Jerusalem (Psa. cxxv. 2), the Alps to the Waldenses, the Pyrenees to the Albigenses. So whatever barriers gave these systems protection hitherto, have fled when the systems themselves had to yield. The "mountains," or barriers, stood them in little stead when God thundered on them the artillery

of his wrath. So completely were they annihilated that their very existence could not be found; and their protection was of no avail to shield the system which they were meant to support, when God rose in his might for their overthrow. We learn here, that a system may long withstand the power of man, but it has no power to resist the force of Omnipotence. God shall yet destroy all false systems—"consume them with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy them with the brightness of his coming."

5. The "great hail." There seems to be a reference here to the discomfiture of the kings of the Amorites, when they were overwhelmed by Joshua in their raid against the Gibeonites (Josh. x. 11), and as these were completely overthrown by the Lord raining great hailstones on them out of heaven, so shall the Lord mete out to the "men" who are the subjects of such systems, a like, or as great punishment. Though their overthrow may not be with literal hail, yet it shall be as complete "by the Spirit of God's mouth," as if it were! "Every stone about the weight of a talent." A talent weighs about 100 lbs.; and to mark the weight of God's wrath coming down on these systems, it is compared to hail of "the weight of a talent."

6. Blasphemy. "And men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail." They are not improved by their miseries and afflictions. Just as a wicked man ordinarily gets worse after a severe affliction, so the men composing these systems are hardened by their very plagues and the stroke inflicted on them; yea, so much so, that instead of being humbled, they "blasphemed God" through very wickedness. This should be a lesson to us. God designs trials and afflictions for man's good—the goodness of God is designed to lead us to repentance (Rom. ii. 4); but if we grow hardened in our crimes, and curse God through the very mercies that were designed for our good, then may we expect weightier strokes, and like these systems, have to undergo "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish" (Rom. ii. 8, 9), yea, "the plague of the hail" of God's wrath "exceeding great."

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XVI.

1. Where is the voice from?—"The temple" in heaven, representing the visible Church on earth.'

2. Whose voice is it?—We think that of the Holy Spirit, the same as in Chap. x. 4, commanding the "angels," or ministers, to pour out the vials, or preach the Gospel, which was a plague on Antichrist. He only can give the true qualifications of a minister.

3. Where were the "vials" to be poured out?—"Upon the earth," or the Antichristian world, for their sins.

4. Who is the "first" (preacher) who "went and poured out his vial"?—We think Luther, at the Reformation.

5. What was the "noisome and grievous sore"?—The preaching of the Gospel on the Romish system.

6. Who were the men on whom the vial fell?—The Romish clergy, as the preaching of the Gospel takes all power of salvation from men, and vests it solely in the Lord Jesus Christ.

7. What is meant by "the mark of the beast and the worshipping of his image"?—(See, for explanation, Chap. xiii. 14-17, and answers on same.)

8. Who is "the second angel"?—We think, not any special personage, but the progressive preaching of the Gospel, which produced the protest at the Diet of Worms (A.D. 1529) against the doctrines and superstitions of the Papal system.

9. What is the meaning of the vial being "poured out on the sea"?—The whole surface of the Romish system, its doctrines, superstitions, &c.

10. How did it become like "the blood of a dead man"?—The whole system became congealed like "the blood of a dead man," as the vitals of the system were affected.

11. How did it appear that "every living soul died in the sea"?—The meaning of this is, that its system got its death-blow at the Reformation, by the power of the Gospel.

12. What is meant by the pouring out of the third "vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters"?—We think it means the suppression of colleges and religious houses of the Papal system, by the further preaching of the Gospel by the third messenger.

13. How did they become blood?—The allusion seems to be to the river Nile, that as it became blood, as a plague on the Egyptians, so these seats of learning became "blood," or like "the blood of a dead man"—inoperative to give vigour to the system.

14. Who is "the angel of the waters"?—We think the same as the last angel, or messenger, whose preaching subverted the colleges and religious houses of the Papal system; and, looking upon its effects, bursts forth in the jubilant song of the text, "Thou art righteous, O Lord," &c.

15. What is the meaning of "giving them blood to drink"?—On account of the colleges and religious houses instigating to so many wars and persecutions of the saints, they are now, by retributive justice, so paralysed and effete, that they have no fresh blood for their system, and are congealed like "the blood of a dead man."

16. Who is "another out of the altar"?—We think, the Lord Jesus Christ, from his position, standing at the altar, as an interceding priest (Chap. viii. 3).

17. Who is "the fourth angel"?—Another Gospel minister.

18. Who is this "sun" on whom the "vial is poured out"?—We think the late Napoleon Bonaparte, made a prisoner by the Germans in A.D. 1870, and who was looked upon for a time as the very bulwark of the Papal system.

19. How did this angel, or messenger, "scorch men with fire"?—Through the knowledge of Reformation principles which the Gospel instils, the Germans were more than a match for the French, and the victory over them was like "scorching" them with "fire and great heat."

20. How did men blaspheme the name of God?—Socialists and Infidels in the war, feeling the galling or "scorching fire" of the German artillery, "blasphemed the name of God" who permitted this plague.

21. Who is the fifth angel?—Another Gospel minister.

22. What is the meaning of his "pouring out his vial on the seat of the beast"?—The preaching of the Gospel, from the Reformation, led to the overthrow of the temporal power of the Pope, which was a terrible trial, or "plague," to the Papacy.

23. How was his "kingdom full of darkness"?—Political darkness on account of his humiliation.

24. How did they "gnaw their tongues for pain"?—They writhed in agony when the Pope's temporal power was gone, and when Protestant ministers were permitted to preach the Gospel in Rome.

25. Did their humiliation lead them to repentance?—No; they still "blasphemed God and repented not of their deeds."

26. Who is the sixth angel?—Another preacher of the Gospel.

27. What is the meaning of the drying up of the Euphrates?—We think the overthrow of the Mahometan or Turkish power. As it was checked for a time at Bagdad, on that river, this would seem to be an earnest of its overthrow there.

28. Who are meant by "the kings of the earth"?—We believe the Jews, as they were the first favoured people, and had a prestige over other nations.

29. What is the meaning of the expression, that their "way might be prepared"?—The political drying up of the river, or the overthrow of the Mahometan power in the East, would prepare the way for the Jews to return to their own land.

30. Who are the "unclean spirits like frogs"?—The evil principles, or false doctrines, proceeding from Pagan Rome, Papal Rome, and Mahometanism.

31. Whom do the "Dragon" and the "Beast" and the "False Prophet" represent?—Pagan Rome, Papal Rome, and Mahometanism.

32. Why likened to "frogs"?—As the word, in the original Greek, means a swelling of the tongue, causing it to give a foul sound, so the false doctrines from these systems would swell out, and do so in awful dimensions.

33. Why are they called "the spirits of devils"?—Because they have an evil tendency.

34. How then were they able to work "miracles"?—We believe they were feigned miracles, like those of the magicians in Egypt.

35. What is the meaning of these spirits going "forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world"?—The evil principles emanating from the above false sources stalk through the earth, trying to allure kings and their subjects throughout the "whole world" for the great "battle."

36. What battle is this?—"Armageddon," as mentioned in the 16th verse.

37. What is the meaning of this battle, called "that great day of God Almighty"?—We think it is a battle of truth against error, that it means the Gospel against the above false systems; and as Armageddon means the hill of Megiddo, where Deborah and Barak gained the victory over Sisera (Judg. v. 19-21), so shall the true Israel, through the power of the Gospel, gain a complete victory over every false system.

38. Where is the place of Armageddon, or where the battle is to be fought?—We believe it is wherever there is a false system throughout the earth.

39. Why is Christ represented coming "as a thief"?—Because he will come suddenly and unexpectedly to enter on this great battle, directing his ministers, and making their preaching, through the power of his Spirit, successful.

40. On whom does he pronounce the blessing?—On him "that watcheth and keepeth his garments." That is, on him who is looking out for his coming to the battle, and is keeping the robe of a Saviour's righteousness on him from being polluted with sin, that he may be ready for the conflict under his Great Captain.

41. How "walk naked and they see his shame"?—The meaning is, that by nature we are without this garment, and the world will see our defect, and we shall be ashamed and unfit for the warfare without the panoply of a Saviour's righteousness.

42. Who is this "seventh angel"?—Another Gospel minister.

43. What is the meaning of his pouring out his "vial," or plague, "into the air"?—As the "air," in Scripture, is represented as Satan's territory (Ephes. ii. 2), so science, using electricity, has forced its way into his territory, and it is like a plague on him, exposing many of his sophistries.

44. Whose "voice" is this that came from the "temple"?—We think that of the Holy Spirit.

45. What is meant by the expression, "It is done"?—Antichrist's power on earth, and Satan's power in the air are, by the preaching of the Gospel and science, exposed and their shams exploded.

46. What is meant by the "voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and the great earthquake"?—We think the "voices" mean those of preachers, like thunder, calling on men to flee out of Babylon; the "lightnings," the power of Christ's Spirit resting on those preachers; the "great earthquake," the intense force of public opinion, condemning the false systems and approving the true. The above usher in the Millennium.

47. How great was the earthquake?—None was like it "since men were on the earth." That is, public opinion was never so strong against the false systems as at the ushering in of the Millennium.

48. What city was this "great city"?—We think it means Rome, or the spiritual Babylon.

49. How is it "divided into three parts"?—The Romish system, of which Rome is the representative, was divided into three parts when the Pope lost the temporal power. Ultramontanes supported Papal infallibility; the Italians, the temporal power; the French, the purely spiritual power.

50. What is meant by "the cities of the nations"?—We think these mean, together with Romanism, Mahometanism and Hindooism, which will fall immediately on its fall.

51. What are we to understand by "great Babylon coming in remembrance before God"?—"Great Babylon," we think, means Rome being punished for her persecution of the saints.

52. What is meant by "the cup of the wine of the fierceness of God's wrath"?—The retributive justice that God metes out to her.

53. Why called "cup of his wrath"?—In allusion to the soporific drug given to malefactors before their execution; so here, the "cup of wrath" is measured out to this false system to prepare the way for her execution.

54. How are we to understand, "Every island fled away"?—We think this means every dependency on any of the former false systems.

55. How is it that "the mountains were not found"?—The meaning seems to be, that as the mountains are a protection round a city, so whatever barriers gave the false systems above-named protection, yielded, or "fled," when the systems themselves yielded.

56. What is meant by "the great hail"?—Their destruction shall be, by the Gospel, as complete as the overthrow of the Amorites by the literal hail, in the war with Joshua (Josh. x. 11).

57. Why is the hail compared to "the weight of a talent"?—To show the weight of God's wrath falling on the false systems.

58. How are we to understand this, that "men blasphemed God" on account "of the hail"?—Instead of "the plague of the hail," or the indignation of God poured out on the false systems, improving them, it only hardened them and made them more wicked against him.

CHAPTER XVII.

THIS chapter exhibits, in another form of vision, the wickedness and fall of the Papal system. Before, the system was represented under the form of a beast ; here, under that of a vile woman. John sees her in the vision and describes her. He has the mystery of her system explained to him, and her utter ruin.

VERSES 1-6.—*And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials . . . and when I saw her I wondered with great admiration.*

I.—Who is this woman ?

She evidently means some idolatrous system, and we take her to mean the Papacy. The apostle John gets a glimpse of her rise and progress, as heretofore described, before her final destruction. "One of the seven angels" who showed John the vision, is likely the same (Chap. xvi. 2), who "poured out his vial upon the earth, upon the men who had the mark of the beast." He calls up John to witness the judgment on this woman.

II.—How is she represented ?

1. "As sitting on many waters." The meaning of this is, that Rome represents many peoples, located on the banks of many rivers, or "waters," as Babylon, on the banks of the river Euphrates. This is called a "great whore," or harlot, which term is significant of great idolatry. Rome worships angels and saints and relics and religious places and images, &c., and in proportion as she is a great idolater shall she be visited with great judgment. A "whore," is one unfaithful to her marriage vows, and Rome, instead of following Christ, to whom she professes to be married, and giving the due reverence to her lawful husband, has often gone aside after saints and

angels, dividing the allegiance with others which should be given to him alone. Antichrist, which Rome has been called, is opposed to Christ instead of being for him. Mahometanism is another form of Antichrist, giving that allegiance to Mahomet which should also be given to Christ. But in this chapter it is likely that the "great whore" is indicative of Papal Rome, as is considered by most commentators.

2. In alliance with idolatrous kings. "With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication." Either they have been seduced by her into fornication, or being of the same mind with her, have made alliances together to share the worship of Christ with other creatures, and dishonour his name and authority. The kings have come in contact with her, as they principally dwell in the cities where she carries on her commerce: and as she "sitteth upon many waters," she has her principal towns where kings reside, as Rome on the Tiber, Lisbon on the Tagus, &c., and she has the opportunity of their acquaintance and a facility for alluring them to her idolatry.

3. In making "the inhabitants of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication." Wherever she went she set up "her fornication." And we have seen that, by her commerce on great cities, she had a fine opportunity for this. "The wine of her fornication" means her attractive and gorgeous rites and ceremonies, her sensational worship, her music, poetry, and statuary, which allure the unwary and produce an intoxication of spurious devotion, to the subverting of the proper devotional feeling. This has the same effect in a spiritual point of view as wine has on the senses of man. What are her swinging of incense, and lighted candles and worship of images, and gorgeous ritual, but a sensational display to captivate and intoxicate the unwary?

4. The "scarlet-coloured beast." This, we consider, represents the worldly authority of kings and potentates, who so long upheld the power of the Papacy, and do so still. As the temporal power of the Pope aided him in the support of the spiritual power; so here, the worldly power of the great ones of the earth uphold the

spiritual power, also represented by the "woman." They both minister to each other's prejudices, and the one is the complement of the other. The "woman," or the spiritual power, having made the "inhabitants of the earth," including the noble and the mighty, "drunk" with her allurements, now easily persuades them to act according to her will. And, as the animal is swayed by the horseman, so she has the great and the mighty under her sway and obedient to her will. Witness her allowing Pepin, in A.D. 751, to dethrone his lawful sovereign, Childeric, king of France, and to usurp the throne. Then he, in return, came to her aid against the Lombards. And witness her still further, in the person of Pope Adrian IV., compelling the Emperor Barbarossa to hold his stirrup when he mounted his horse. These are but a sample of her compelling the worldly power on which she rode, or leant for support, to do her behests. She is represented as an inhabitant of the "wilderness," that is, having no home, being no longer a wife, but wandering like a harlot, having left the husband of her espousals.

Why on "a scarlet-coloured beast"? As scarlet denotes the trappings of the princes, or the great ones of the world (Dan. v. 29), so the worldly power enabled her to carry out her designs, as in the Inquisition and the massacre of St. Bartholomew, in France, in A.D. 1572.

5. "Full of names of blasphemy." The woman, represented by the Pope, has assumed names which are full of arrogance, as those of "the Vicar of Christ," "the Holy Father," "the Supreme Pontiff," "the Universal Bishop," "the Lord God, the Pope!" It is monstrous for any human being to assume such names. Is it any wonder that the text calls the woman, "full of names of blasphemy."

6. "The seven heads and ten horns." (See, for explanation, Chap. xii. 3.)

7. The dress of the woman. She "was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour." This represents the dress of the Papacy, making a gorgeous display and reflecting the world-power again. This was the dress of the rich man, representing the world-power (Luke xvi. 19); and how far the Pope is represented by the world-power when he

appears in state, with his scarlet hat and scarlet shoes, it is left to the reader to conjecture. But this much is plain, that there is a reflexion of the world's gorgeousness in all her movements and operations, and especially in her splendid worship, in order to allure. Further, she is "decked with gold and precious stones and pearls." These, in addition, help to set out her trappings and make the system an object of admiration. Every costly ornament is brought in to embellish her ritualistic display and make the rich bow before it. She is playing this game in England at present, and attracting numbers of the aristocracy.

8. Still further, she holds in her hand "a golden cup, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication." The golden cup is considered by many the chalice for the eucharist, which must be brilliant and costly, and in keeping with the rest of the ceremonial. And as she professes, by this cup with the bread, to offer up in the eucharist "the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ," as a proper and true sacrifice for the living and the dead, surely it contains "abominations" dishonouring to Christ's real sacrifice, and is a "filthiness," or foulness, of her fornication or idolatry which must be abhorrent in God's eyes, as taking the honour from himself.

9. Her frontlet. "And upon her forehead was a name written, *MYSTERY, BABYLON . . . AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*"

Part of this frontlet is called "mystery," meaning, as John intimates, that there is "mystery" in her system; and everyone who has studied it must come to the same conclusion. What can be a greater mystery than transubstantiation, and the sacrifice of the mass for the living and the dead, and purgatorial fire to purify the soul? Part of it is "Babylon the great." She is identified with Babylon of old, famous among ancient nations for her idolatry. As such, the apostle John takes her as a type of Papal Rome, famous among modern nations for the same sin. Witness her worship of images and saints, which is the great hindrance to the conversion of the Jews to Christianity, who are so much opposed to idolatry in any

shape. As Babylon was great in itself, and famous for its idolatry, so Papal Rome is great in that, and famous for the same.

Another part of the inscription on her forehead is—"The mother of harlots." As this title "harlot" designates her who is unfaithful to her rightful husband, so this system gives the worship, or a large part of it, which belongs to God alone, to others. The term, "abominations of the earth," is added to the frontlet. This is the last part of the inscription. Her idolatries in giving the worship to creatures which belongs to God alone are surely "abominations of the earth." What can be more revolting on the earth and a greater blot on its soil, than to see worship rendered to the creature which should have been given to the Creator? Do not such sins rise in rebellion against the Most High, and make the land to be abhorred in his sight? Joined with Babylon's idolatry of old, Rome's idolatry consists largely in her superstitions, her purgatory and penances and prayers for the dead, which detract from the efficacy of the atonement, and substitute helps for the blood of Christ, God's Son, which cleanseth from all sin (1 John i. 7).

10. Her persecuting spirit. "Drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." During the long years of the Inquisition, "the blood of the saints and of the martyrs" flowed like water. During this time thousands upon thousands of God's saints were slaughtered, with the approval of this "woman"—the Papacy. The Inquisition owed its origin to Dominic, a Spaniard, early in the 13th century. It was a court of trial to punish and destroy heretics. As early as A.D. 1213, Pope Innocent III. instituted a crusade against the poor Albigenses, in which many of them were slain for the truth. The cruelties of the Duke of Alva and the Jesuites in the Low Countries, Holland and Belgium, are long since matters of history. Here the tremendous tribunal was brought into full force to punish the heretics. The massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, in France, on August 22nd, A.D. 1572, is one of the most noted on record, when some 10,000 Protestants fell as a sacrifice to the fury of Rome; and the Pope of that day, Gregory

XIII., ordered a medal to be struck with this inscription, *Ugonitorum strages*, the slaughter of the Huguenots, to commemorate the event. And it is said, on good authority, that for the last 600 years—for the Papacy did not persecute much for the first 600 years after its rise—she has put to death, by the Inquisition and other modes, about 50,000,000 of Protestants, or 80,000 a year. Truly, it may be said of this “woman,” that she is “drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.”

III.—John’s amazement.

“And when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.” It was not strange that John wondered at her. He saw her near the time of her end, and wondered at her declining power; and yet, while science and true religion had exposed so many of her sophistries, he wondered to see her putting forth such pretensions to universal empire, and refusing to believe she was on the wane, and that hoar hairs were coming fast on her. Like many a decaying beauty, she could hardly persuade herself that the vigour of her youth was decaying, but still aimed at coercing the consciences of men and binding in fetters all refusing her dictates; or, if need be, punishing them with death, if she was able. While the light of the Reformation has been shining for 300 years, witness her late persecution of the Madias, in Spain, for teaching Bible truth. Matamoros and his companion were shut up in a dungeon, where the former caught a cold, which shortened his days. This is not strange, when they were kept in that dungeon for two years, the victims of relentless persecution, and then condemned to exile for life. The sentence of the latter was commuted, and now he is a preacher of the Gospel in Granada. Again, witness her insisting on the Concordat with Austria being carried out, viz., that where only one of the parents is a Roman Catholic, the children shall invariably be brought up in that religion. This was the law, and was insisted upon sternly till it was broken up by the war at Sadoa. She still maintains the right to do just as she pleases, making all, so far as she has the power, passive instruments of her will. Is it any wonder John

stood in amazement at her daring pretensions? And his amazement might be "great," indeed, that while her power was waning, she could not be made to believe it. Vain pride had buoyed her up, holding the world so long at her nod, that she cannot bring herself down to her altered circumstances. In her case, as in all cases, "pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall;" and now her props are being removed one after another, as she is deprived of this authority, and that till it shall be shouted over her, "Babylon the great is fallen! is fallen!"

VERSES 7-11.—*And the angel said unto me, wherefore didst thou marvel . . . even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.*

The angel enquires of John why he marvelled at "the mystery of the woman, and the beast that carried her," having "seven heads and ten horns." We have seen already that the "beast which carried her" is the world-power, and that the "seven heads and ten horns" are the seven mountains on which the city of Rome sat, and the ten kingdoms that sprang up on the overthrow of the Western Empire, in A.D. 476. (See explanation on Chap. xii. 3.)

1. Who is "the beast that was, and is not, and yet is"? We answer—The Pagan, or the Pagan Roman Empire, which had disappeared with its overthrow. This is the old dragon of Chap. xii. 3, wounded by the sword of the Goths. He "was," or existed, for a time, but not now. "Yet is." The beast, or monster, Papal Rome, has taken its place.

2. His ascent. "He shall ascend out of the bottomless pit." That is, Papal Rome representing him in another form, called Christian, shall ascend out of the Pagan mass of superstition and idolatry, as from "the bottomless pit" of darkness, having no real foundation of truth. And is not this so? The Romish system sets up tradition on an equality with the Scriptures of truth, instead of building alone, like Protestantism, on "the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone (Ephes. ii. 20).

3. His descent—"into perdition." This must be his inevitable tendency, and every other form of Antichrist. Though there are many of God's children in Papal Rome as a Church, yet the system must "go into perdition," or be destroyed, before the light of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. Babylon shall sink as a millstone into the mighty waters.

The lessons here are—(1) That error shall perish, but truth is everlasting. (2) The length of a system may be measured in proportion to the amount of truth in it.

4. The wonder of the people at what is happening. "And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world." The "wonder" arises from those "whose names were not written in the book of life." And why do these wonder? At the mystery of "the beast that was, and is not, and yet is." Here, surely, is an ecclesiastical paradox, or an apparent contradiction; and yet, like many another wonder, it can be explained. We have seen that Pagan Rome was, and is not,—for it got a deadly wound,—and yet is, under another form, that of Papal Rome. This latter is Pagan Rome dressed up in a new garb, retaining its persecuting spirit and many of its Pagan rites. They wonder that the system which had continued so long, and put forth such pretensions to sanctity and the working of miracles and universal supremacy, should fall. Yet so it is. Every false system must come to nought and perish, however long it may have continued.

5. Additional mental power is needed to understand the mystery. "And here is the mind which hath wisdom." It requires a wonderful grasp of mind, and what can only be given by the Holy Spirit's teaching, to understand the system which was dead, and is still alive, and likely to continue for a considerable time. The nature of such a system is constantly a mystery.

6. "The seven heads"? "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." While Rome sat on seven hills she sat on seven forms of government, each having kingly power—as Kings, Consuls, Dictators, Tribunes, Decemvirs, Triumvirate, and Em-

perors. The woman, representing Pagan Rome first, had her seat on these forms of government, and representing Papal Rome now, has still her seat on the world-power, and under whatever form craves it to support her.

7. The "seven kings." These are the seven forms of government. And while all the forms of government were not kingly, yet authority was vested in them as in kings. Five are fallen. That is, in John's time, Kings, Consuls, Dictators, Tribunes, Decemvirs, and Triumvirate had passed away. Six literally had passed away; but John looked on Tribunes and Decemvirs as one—the former only continuing a few years—and the Emperor was the seventh. "One is." That is, the Imperial form was standing then. "The other is not yet come." That is, the eighth, or the temporal power of the Pope, which had not yet appeared till A.D. 755. "And when he cometh, he must continue a short space." And so it was: the temporal power only continued from A.D. 755 till A.D. 1870. "And when he cometh." That is, the Pope representing a form of government, as a temporal prince, "he must continue a short space."

8. The beast that is the eighth. "And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth." That is, Pagan Rome that had once existed, but was slain by the sword of the Goths in A.D. 476, has now no existence as such. "Yet he is the eighth." That is, he is dressed up in another form, as Papal Rome, and is the eighth form of government in the shape of the temporal power of the Pope. We are to remember that the beast coming up out of the earth (Chap. xiii. 11) had two horns like a lamb. This is the Papacy with its temporal and spiritual power. And now the second horn on its head is the temporal power, which is the eighth form of government. "And is of the seven." That is, forming part and parcel of the whole system or forms of government. "And goeth into perdition." That is, that he will be destroyed. This is the end of the Papal system, and of every form of Antichrist, which "the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (2 Thes. ii. 8).

VERSES 12-18.—*And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings . . . and the woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.*

1. "The ten horns." These are the representatives of the ten kings which arose out of the fall of the Western Roman Empire (A.D. 476). (See exposition of Chap. xiii. 1.) "They have received no kingdom as yet." That is to say, John saw, in vision, the ten kingdoms, and the ten kings who were to rule over them; but this was future, after the fall of the Empire, and after his time (A.D. 89). "But receive power as kings one hour with the beast." The meaning of this seems to be that in the "hour" of the development of Papal Rome, or the "Man of Sin," from A.D. 476 (his conception) till A.D. 755, when the Pope became a little horn, or assumed temporal power, the kings are carving out their kingdoms; and though they are not literally kings yet, they act with kingly power in connexion with the beast. The future kings that John saw were the Goths and the Vandals and the Heruli, and others who split up the Western Empire with their swords, and are waiting their time when they are to be made kings out of its ruins. The "beast," or Papal Rome, is now coming into authority—conceived, as we have seen, in 476, and developing till 755—and these would-be kings act in concert with the new system. Thus was the "Man of Sin" conceived before the Western Empire fell, or about its fall. (See, for further explanation of the ten "horns," or ten kings, and the development of the "Man of Sin"—"the number of a man"—Chap. xiii. 1, 18.)

2. The "one hour." This does not seem to be a prophetic hour, as Chap. ix. 15, but, as stated already, the time of the development of Papal Rome, when the would-be kings were preparing for their future power. As it was developing for its future greatness, so were they, during this period; and hence the two were well able to assist each other in the future war against the Lamb, as recorded further on.

3. The unanimity of the kings. "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the

beast." And they did co-operate with all their mind and heart to establish the Roman beast on the temporal throne, which gave him such power afterwards in the persecution of the saints.

4. The warfare. "These shall make war with the Lamb." So it was; these kings, in behalf of the Papacy, and to establish firmly its civil or temporal power, waged war with the Lamb, or with the saints of God, who are legally one with him, to root them out, and overthrow them. But he who was with them was greater than he that was against them, and, consequently, "the Lamb shall overcome them." Their opposition against the Lamb's people is the same as against himself. Christ said to Paul, going to Damascus to persecute people (Acts ix. 4), "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" looking on the persecution of his people as that of himself; and the result is, they shall be overthrown, "for he is Lord of lords and King of kings." He has all power in heaven and on earth, and he will scatter them as he did the Assyrian army coming up to Hezekiah to defy the living God (Isa. chap. xxxvii). The reason why he espouses the quarrel of his saints is, that they are "called, and chosen, and faithful." That is, they are his peculiar people, whom he has purchased with his own blood. and their quarrel is his quarrel, and their cause is his cause. Here we have the grand identity, or oneness, of Christ and his people. He keeps them as the apple of his eye. He has them engraven on the palms of his hands. Their wails are continually before him. "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them" (Isa. lxiii. 9).

5. The waters. "The waters which thou savest are . . . nations, and tongues." We saw in the explanation of the first verse of this chapter that Rome chose populous places, such as maritime towns and cities on great rivers, to plant her strongest entrenchments. Witness Rome on the Tiber, Paris on the Seine, Lisbon on the Tagus, Vienna on the Danube, in order to give her strength, and access to kings and potentates visiting these places; and that she may best accomplish her designs, by having her capital cities on these prominent centres. This has ever been part of her policy; and a wise and worldly policy it

has been, so far as aggression is concerned. It enables her to command larger fields of labour for her purpose and secure greater popular influence. Of old time, and at present, it is on the most prominent places which she can secure that she takes her seat.

6. The ten horns. "These shall hate the whore . . . and burn her with fire." We have here the hatred of the horns, or the ten kings, to the woman called the "whore." A question arises—How is it that the ten kings, which in the preceding verses (12, 13) gave her "their strength," and assisted her in the persecution of the saints, now in turn persecute herself? The solution seems to be the following:—As the moon has two phases, and now presents one side to us, and now another, so Rome has two sides, the temporal and the spiritual, and, as it suits her interest, presents whatever side will attract. Some times she is called the "beast," the worldly side, and sometimes the "woman," or the spiritual side; and when her superstitions and idolatries stand prominently out, the word "whore" is applied to the woman, as here. John saw her worldly side more prominently, and he calls her the "beast," meaning the second form of the Pagan Roman Empire rising out of the sea (Chap. xiii. 1). She had this worldly side even in her conception and further development into the temporal power of the Papacy. This John sees also in the "beast" carrying the "woman" (verse 7), and the kings "giving their power and strength unto her" (verse 13). They assisted her in the worldly part, while she was developing into the temporal power of the Pope, as a sovereign among nations (verse 13); and now, though they are connected with her as a worldly sovereign (for they are called "the ten horns upon the beast") yet they turn their hatred now against the spiritual side of that very system which they did so much to set up. The reason of this may be, that while she and they in common may be temporal princes, yet she has now a pride about her, as having spiritual power; and as she sometimes uses that to humble them, and to show her authority over them, they resent this, and persecute her in turn. They see that as a spiritual system she prostitutes it to the most degrading superstition and idolatry, so

much so, that she is called the "whore;" and even as worldly men they reject such prostitution, and turn their arms against her.

These "ten horns" are the descendants of the ten kings who assisted her in days gone by, as a considerable time must have elapsed from the date of the one party assisting her (verse 14) till the other party began to torment her. As they conspired together for the establishment of the worldly power, so now, in their turn, the descendants of the same worldly powers that set her up turn against her to overthrow her. Here is a strange order of events, but it is just like what takes place a thousand times in the world; God makes the idol which men worship often to be their greatest snare. The same weapons which set up Rome, and made her most powerful as a temporal sovereign, and most powerful to support their own worldly designs, are now her greatest plague. And though there has been a long period elapsing since the ten kings set up the temporal power of the Papacy, in A.D. 755, do we not see France, in 1870,—as one of the descendants of these kings,—the means of the overthrow of that power? Whenever she withdrew her troops from Italy, as needing them against Germany, the temporal power of the Pope falls. And we have no doubt the kings, in turn, will be the means, under God, of subverting her, till she is finally overthrown. By degrees this "shall make her desolate and naked." Italy has taken a strip of her territory,—the Papal States,—Germany has confiscated her religious houses in large part. She is losing her power, temporal and spiritual, piece by piece; the props are being removed till the whole system shall totter. "And shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire," means the complete riddance that the kings shall make of her, till she is "consumed with the Spirit of God's mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of his coming."

7. The permission granted to destroy her. "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will." The literal meaning of the original Greek is, that God hath permitted this. He is not the author of evil. He permits Joseph's brethren to sell him, and Judas to betray Christ, but did not command them to do so, yet overruled it for good.

So he permits these kings, in turn, to destroy that system which their predecessors had helped to build up,—for his own glory, and “to fulfil his will.” “And to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast.” The meaning of this appears to be, that as they, or their predecessors, were unanimous in building her up, they are unanimous in pulling her down. And as the “beast” means the worldly side of the system, which so long carried, or supported, the Papacy; so these kings now agree to give “their kingdom,” or the weight of their influence, to the same worldly side against the “whore,” or spiritually corrupt side. She now becomes divided against herself; and “a house divided against itself cannot stand.” We have several examples of the worldly side turning against the spiritual side. In France, lately, the minister of worship, M. Bert, forbade the bishops to go to Rome without the consent of the State. And in Belgium, about the same time, while the Pope and the bishops claim complete control in education, the State stepped in and prohibited this, claiming to itself the right to order it. Here we have the worldly side of the Papacy thwarting, and consuming, as with fire, the spiritual side. The lesson we learn here is, that God, in retributive justice, makes her abettors, the kings or their descendants who once aided her, to become her cruel avengers.

8. How long is her persecution to continue? “Until the words of God shall be fulfilled.” That is, until the prediction of her overthrow be accomplished, pointing, likely, to Chap. xviii. 2. God has threatened her destruction, and these kings shall give their aid till that is accomplished. John again calls her by the name of the “woman,” and identifies her with the “great city.” “The woman which thou sawest is that great city.” The explanation seems to be that Rome is the city here meant. The only city, in John’s time, which “reigned over the kings of the earth,” was Rome. This became afterwards the principal seat of the Popes, and where the woman wielded her dreadful power. John, in vision, identifies the woman and the city, and calls her “that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” As Rome, for a long time, reigned over the kings of the earth, so the

woman, or the Papal system here in Rome, the capital city of the Popes, has had its head-quarters for centuries. The "woman," or the spiritual side of it, reigneth over the kings of the earth; that is, shows her authority over them, as a spiritual power. She looks upon herself as above them, and in pride reigns over them. For centuries, during the dark ages before the Reformation, kings and emperors were at her nod. She deposed them and raised them up very much as she pleased. And though her authority is fast declining, yet she has still great power over princes and potentates in the nations where she has sway. Witness her power still in Austria, and Italy, and France, and Spain. There is no question it was at her dictation that the late Emperor of the French undertook the Franco-German war, which cost him so dear, and which was a direct step to the overthrow of her temporal power.

Let us take a lesson from this chapter, and learn that, notwithstanding the height, or power, of any system, if it is not based on truth it must fall in the end; for truth only shall stand the test of God's judgments. "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil" (Eccles. xii. 14).

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XVII.

1. Who is this angel, "one out of the seven"?—We think the same as that mentioned in Chap. xvi. 2.

2. Who is this woman, called by this opprobrious name, "whore"?—We think the Papacy.

3. Why is she represented as "sitting upon many waters"?—Because Rome represents many peoples located on the banks of maritime rivers.

4. Why is she called "the great whore"?—Because she has been guilty of great idolatry, in worshipping angels and saints and images innumerable, dividing the worship with others which should have been given to Christ alone.

5. How have "the kings of the earth committed fornication" with her?—The "kings" were in alliance with her, sharing in her sin.

6 How were "the inhabitants of the earth made drunk with the wine of her fornication"?—As wine makes drunk, or intoxicates, so her gorgeous rites and ceremonies, and inspiring music, have drugged the spiritual faculties.

7. Why is she represented as "sitting upon a scarlet-coloured beast"?—This seems to mean that she was upheld and supported largely by kings and potentates, whose clothing was scarlet, or purple, and she takes this name from her supporters.

8. How is she "full of names of blasphemy"?—The system, or the "woman," represented by the Pope, has assumed names of blasphemy, as "the Vicar of Christ," "the Lord God the Pope."

9. How has she "seven heads and ten horns"?—(See, for answer, Note on Chap. xii. 3, or answers to 10th and 11th Questions there.)

10. Why is the "woman" represented as "arrayed in purple"?—Making a gorgeous display, and reflecting the world-power.

11. Why is she "decked with gold and precious stones and pearls"?—To make the system the object of admiration, and to allure the rich to bow before her.

12. What is meant by the "golden cup in her hand"?—The chalice for the eucharist, which must be costly and brilliant also.

13. How is it "full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication"?—Because it dishonours the sacrifice of Christ; as this cup professes, in the sacrifice of the mass, to offer up a true sacrifice for the living and the dead.

14. Why is "fornication" included here?—As taking the honour from Christ which belongs exclusively to him as his own.

15. Why is she called "MYSTERY"?—Because there is a vast amount of mystery in her system.

16. Why is she called "BABYLON THE GREAT"?—Identifying her with Babylon of old, famous for her idolatry.

17. How is she "THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS"?—Because she gives part of the worship, which belongs to God alone, to images and relics and saints, and thus is unfaithful to the rightful husband.

18. Why is the phrase, "ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" added?—Because such acts of worship, given to creatures, are revolting to sensible men, and are truly "abominations" on the earth.

19. How is she "drunken with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus"?—This refers to her persecuting spirit, in which the blood of thousands and millions of the saints and martyrs flowed like water.

20. Why did John "wonder" at seeing her?—He wondered at her decline, when he foresaw in vision her future decline and fall, notwithstanding her once greatness.

21. Who is meant by "the beast that carrieth the woman"?—The world-power, as we have seen already represented by the scarlet.

22. What is meant by "the seven heads and ten horns"?—The seven mountains on which Rome sat, and the ten kingdoms which sprang up on the overthrow of the Pagan Roman Empire, in A.D. 476.

23. Who was "the beast that was, and is not"?—The Pagan Roman Empire, which had disappeared in the above overthrow.

24. How "shall he ascend out of the bottomless pit"?—He shall rise from his fallen condition of idolatry and will-worship; from degradation as low as the bottomless pit, into the form of Papal Rome.

25. How does the beast go into perdition?—The Papal system, in this new position, will go down from bad to worse, till it shall be finally destroyed by the power of the Gospel.

26. Who are the men that shall "wonder" at this?—They "whose names are not written in the book of life."

27. How are we to understand the meaning of "the beast that was, and is not, and yet is"?—Pagan Rome, which once was, and is not now, but yet is, in another form, that of Papal Rome.

28. How are "the seven heads seven mountains"?—(1) In a literal form, the seven heads are the seven hills on which Rome is built. (2) But she has also seven forms of government, called crowns (Chap. xii. 3), on which she stood from time to time.

29. What forms were these?—Kings, Consuls, Dictators, Tribunes, Decemvirs, Triumvirate, and Emperors.

30. Who are the "seven kings"?—The seven forms of government; yet, though all the forms were not kingly, authority was vested in them, as in kings.

31. How are "five fallen"?—In John's time (A.D. 98), Kings, Consuls, Dictators (Tribunes and Decemvirs), and Triumvirate had passed away—for he looked upon Tribunes and Decemvirs as one, the former lasting only a few years. Six had literally fallen, though only five in John's mind.

32. How is it that "one is"?—The Imperial form was standing in John's time.

33. Which is the "other" that "is not yet come"?—The eighth, or temporal power of the Pope, that did not come till A.D. 755.

34. What was the "short time" he continued?—From A.D. 755 till A.D. 1870.

35. How is "the beast that was, and is not, the eighth"?—He is the eighth form of government, in the temporal power of the Pope.

36. How "is he of the seven"?—He is only a new form of Pagan Rome, which formed part of the whole system.

37. How does he "go into perdition"?—The meaning is, that he will finally be destroyed.

38. Who are meant by "the ten horns"?—The ten kings who arose out of the Western Roman Empire on its fall.

39. How "have they received no kingdom as yet"?—In John's time they had received no kingdom.

40. How did "they receive power as kings one hour with the beast"?—The meaning seems to be, that in the "hour" (A.D. 476 till 755), the development period of Papal Rome, the kings were carving out their kingdoms in unison with the beast.

41. Who were these kings?—The Goths and Vandals and Heruli and others, who split up the Western Roman Empire with their swords, and were waiting to be made kings out of its ruins.

42. How did these kings "give their power and strength unto the beast"?—They co-operated with Papal Rome in her persecution of the saints.

43. How did they make war with the Lamb"?—By making war against his saints, who are legally, or mystically, one with him.

44. On what ground does he espouse the quarrel of the saints?—Because they "are called, and chosen, and faithful."

45. How are "the waters, places, and multitudes," &c.?—Because the waters were the places where the multitudes assembled, as Rome chose large rivers where to plant her populous towns, and there she took her seat.

46. Why is she designated by the term "whore" in the text?—On account of her idolatry, and her alienation from her rightful husband, the Lamb.

47. How is it that the "ten horns," or the ten kings, now hate the "whore" whom they so lately co-operated with?—They hate her in her spiritual aspect, for this is her name thus, and as such she intends to humble them.

48. Why are the ten horns represented as being "upon the beast"?—It means that the descendants of the ten kings are still with her in her worldly power, though they hate her spiritual power.

49. What is meant by "eating her flesh, and burning her with fire"?—The complete riddance of her from the earth.

50. How does God "put in the hearts" of these kings "to fulfil his will"?—He permits them—as he cannot be the author of evil—to be the subverters of this system, and thus carries out his will in its destruction.

51. What is the meaning of "giving their kingdom unto the beast"?—The meaning seems to be, that they "agree to give their kingdom," or influence, to the worldly side of the Papal system, against her superstitions and corruptions, which act of theirs has divided her against herself, for her overthrow.

52. How long is this influence against her to continue?—"Until the words of God shall be fulfilled," or the time for her final destruction, pointed out in Chap. xviii. 2.

53. Who is "the woman"?—The Papal system.

54. Which "is that great city"?—Rome, the capital of Roman Christendom.

55. Why are "the woman" and "the city" represented as one?—Because Rome, as the capital city of the Popes, gave the woman her greatest influence.

56. How does Rome, or the woman, "reign over the kings of the earth"?—Owing to Rome's position, as the mart of nations, on the Tiber, where many kings congregate, she wielded an influence over them, temporally and spiritually, teaching them her laws and customs, and spiritual superstitions and idolatries.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THIS chapter introduces the fall of Babylon, typifying Rome, after the plague had been poured out on her. These plagues, one after another, so weaken and exhaust her, that she is now ready to fall, and does fall under the weight of the indignation of Jehovah's wrath.

VERSES 1-8. — *And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven . . . for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.*

These verses introduce the angel; set forth the fall of Babylon; the ground of her fall; the weight of her punishment; and the suddenness of it.

1. Who is this "angel"? We think he is the Holy Spirit, because there seems to be much identity between the utterances here and that of the angel in Chap. v. 2, who is evidently the Holy Spirit, as he must be different from the Messiah, or the Lamb, on that occasion, who prevails to take the book and to open the seals thereof. After the vision, or in connexion with it, of the seven plagues, John sees this "another angel," or the Holy Spirit, "come down from heaven" to make the announcement. He is called "another angel," as different from the "one of the seven angels" (Chap. xvii. 1), who talked with John, and asked him to look at the judgment that was coming. This angel is represented here as "having great power;" and if he is the Holy Spirit, as we take him to be, then he has omnipotent power. "All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will" (1 Cor. xii. 11). He must here have great power, when he had authority to proclaim the doom of this once-powerful system.

"The earth was lightened with his glory." As the sun lights up the firmament of heaven, so this angel lights up

the earth with the knowledge of the truth. This is likely to be the case after the fall of Babylon. Indeed, in the Millennium, "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi. 9). If this angel be the Holy Spirit, then he it is who lends power to the Gospel, gives light to dark souls, yea, brings spiritual light out of darkness; and it may be well said of him, "the earth was lightened with his glory."

2. The fall of Babylon. It is a great fall: and to call attention to the terrible crash, the angel summons the listening universe, announcing it with a "strong voice." The universe in heaven and earth had been spectators of her sin; they are now to witness her overthrow. "Babylon the great is fallen! is fallen!" "And," in her fall, "is become the habitation of devils and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." The reference is here, likely, to the fall of ancient Babylon (Isa. xiii. 19-22), that as it became literally a scene of desolation in its fall, a receptacle of every thing foul and unclean, so Rome Papal in its fall, in a spiritual point of view, would become the same. The "devils and foul spirits" are the same as those described in Chap. xvi. 14 (see exposition on that passage); and the "unclean and hateful birds," are omens of still greater destruction. Certain birds of old, as harpies, mentioned in classical fable, and ravens, were regarded as omens of ill fate wherever they haunted; and John has likely this before his mind, predicting, as he does, the utter ruin of Babylon. We think that here there is a reference to a second greater fall than has already been predicted; for at the 4th verse there is a call to "come out of her," before her final destruction. This fall here, in the verse under consideration, we think, refers to a first fall. At one time Babylon, or Rome, laid some claim to respectability and deference, as a religious system, but she has woefully degenerated from that, and fallen into greater superstition and idolatry. It is quite well known, that for the first 600 years of her existence, the Papacy, as a system, did not persecute much. It is only in the last 600 that she has slain 50,000,000 of God's people, and has become "drunk with the blood of the saints." Now, at the time of her descrip-

tion in the text, she has fallen from her former degree of respectability, and has treasured up in her the doctrine of demons, viz.—laying claim to miracle-working, and to the enunciating of new dogmas, as the Immaculate Conception of A.D. 1854, and the Papal Infallibility of A.D. 1870, the canonization of dead saints, and the worshipping of dead men's bones and relics, which will be the cause of her final ruin.

3. The ground of her first fall. (1) "All nations have drunk . . . of her fornication." This means, that as intoxicating liquors make drunk, so Rome, as we have seen already, having her marts on the principal seaports of the world, has allured the nations by her fascinating rites and ceremonies, and intoxicated the senses by her grand music and gorgeous display. "The wrath of her fornication" was explained in Chap. xiv. 8. (See Note on that passage.) (2) "And the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her." As she has had access to the kings of the earth by her favourite position, so these have imbibed her spirit, and have fallen into her mystic and idolatrous rites. (3) "And the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through . . . her delicacies." That is, these have made a fortune by selling her relics and images and pictures; and it is well known, that in Roman Catholic countries, and even in the South and West of Ireland, these are exposed for sale on the streets, as toys are for children. She has these "delicacies," or images, and relics in abundance, and many are enriched by their traffic.

4. The warning to come out of her. "Come out of her, my people." The "other voice," here, "from heaven," must be a voice different from the former, for it is called "another voice." It seems to be the voice of Jesus Christ himself, warning men of the fearful doom awaiting those found in mystic Babylon, or Rome, when the terrible crash of her final doom comes. It appears to be the voice of Christ, for the expression is, "my people." Christ has purchased his people with his own blood, and they cannot perish, even some of them be found in the great apostacy. Some of his people may be tampering with Rome. Some of them may be in it, as Martin Boas, and others of a kindred spirit; and now he warns them to flee out of it,

that they may "not be partakers of her sins, and receive not of her plagues." The word "plagues" is in the plural number, denoting that low as she has fallen already, it may not be by one stroke that she is finally to come to ruin, but by repeated strokes of wrath measured out to her. You cut a tree down in the forest, but it is not by one stroke of the axe that it falls, it is by repeated ones that it finally succumbs. So with Rome: though the seven plagues have come, the last may be a series of strokes that will weaken her more and more till she finally yields, and the cry is heard, "Rejoice over her . . . ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her."

5. The ground of her second fall. "For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." This shows the enormity of her crimes, reaching even "to heaven," in their arrogance and presumption. There is a reference here, likely, to Chap. xiii. 13, where the "beast made fire to come down from heaven on the earth." That is, through feigned fire that he pretended to make, that he might give plausibility to his system. (See Note on that passage.) So here, one of the grounds of Babylon's, or Rome's, downfall, is the fact of her sins reaching to heaven in their enormity. "And God hath remembered her iniquities." Here is retributive justice—punishment for the sin.

"Reward her even as she rewarded you." A question may arise here—Why is revenge to be taken on her when Jesus says (Matt. v. 44) "Love your enemies," &c.? The command here to "reward her" according to her deeds, is not to private individuals, who are to "love their enemies," but to the avengers of God's enemies, employed by him to deal with her as a system; and as she is to be overthrown, he uses means for this; and the command is to those who are to be the means, in his hand, of bringing it about. "And double . . . according to her works." This just shows the weight of God's retributive justice for her faults. Not only is he to mete out an equivalent of punishment for the faults she has committed against his people, but she is to get the double—as it were, compound interest—for her deserts. "Vengeance is mine; I will

repay, saith the Lord." And these executions of wrath on her by his people, in return for what she inflicted on them, are not to be active, as in the way of harbouring revenge, as if the quarrel were theirs; but they are to be passive instruments in his hand to espouse his quarrel in his own time. This takes off the edge from vindictive feeling on the part of God's people, and leaves the quarrel in his own hands who will espouse it. "In the cup which she has filled double." This means the cup of punishment which she caused many of the saints to drink to the bitter dregs, in the prison, or on the scaffold, or in the fire. Double that to her, as passive executioners in God's hand, that the wrath may come upon her to the uttermost.

"How much she hath glorified herself torment and sorrow give her." The same thought is expressed here as in verse 3, where there is a reference to her "delicacies," or luxuries—merchants made "rich through the abundance of her delicacies," or sale of her wares, pictures and statues, &c. And in proportion as she glorified herself, or reflected her dignity before the world in pageants and processions, and the sale of relics and images, in a business point of view, or the sale of indulgences in a spiritual point of view, "so much torment and sorrow give her," says God, who taketh vengeance. In the same proportion as she has tried to exalt herself by this species of traffic, let her suffer an equivalent of punishment. "For she saith in her heart see no sorrow." This was her boast. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." She "became vain in her imaginations, and her foolish heart was darkened." She prided herself in her security, but the higher her ambition, the greater was her fall. She prided herself as a "queen" among the nations, boasted that she would never become a widow, or be destitute of assistance on which to lean, and that no sorrow would ever come nigh her. What a lesson! "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

"Therefore shall her plagues come in one day . . . for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." The culmination of her sorrows, like the convergence of the rays of the

sun, in a burning lens, shall meet on her at once to consume her. Two things enter into the culmination of her punishment—its severity and suddenness. All the plagues gather and light on her at once. Like as some thunder-cloud gathers blackness, and discharges its lightning of death on some guilty city at once, so God's judgments shall flash suddenly on her to her utter ruin—"for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." He has all the plagues and elements of wrath under his control, and can cause them to accumulate in one day on her guilty head. Here is her *second fall*, and her final doom. Let sinners take warning from this, and flee at once out of her, and from the sins that were the cause of her doom, to Christ, who is their only refuge in the day of God's vengeance.

VERSES 9-20.—*And the kings of the earth . . . God hath avenged you on her,*

These verses set forth the parties bewailing her fall.

1. Kings. These had "committed fornication and lived deliciously with her." They shall bewail her. (1) For losing her power. She is no longer mistress of the nations. She is no longer able to bestow her honours and favours on the world-power which carried her. And no wonder that the kings are grieved, for they suffer more or less in their dignity by her fall. They were participators in her fornication, and "lived deliciously with her," or shared in her idolatrous rites, and so they shall feel her fall. (2) For her punishment. "Burning," which is the most dreadful calamity, has come upon her, and they "lament at the sight of it—at "the smoke of her burning." It ascended to heaven, like the smoke of a great furnace, and men were appalled at the sight, especially those that were mixed up with her. Much as they liked her in her prosperity they flee from her in her calamity. They are represented as "standing afar off, for the fear of her torment." They are afraid that as they shared in her "delicacies" and luxuries they shall share in her judgments. And they keep as far from her as possible, exclaiming, as they see her doom, "Alas, alas, that great

city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come." They compare her to Babylon, that rose up to heaven in her greatness, but became the basest of cities in her fall. The Romish system was once one of the greatest in her palmy days, but she shall be the basest in her overthrow. The suddenness of the fall is another cause of wonder—"in one hour is thy judgment come." Like Sodom of old, on a sudden God's judgments from heaven fell upon her, and overthrew her with a great conflagration. God is merciful, but just; let men be warned, and "abstain from all appearance of evil," and find safety in the atonement of Jesus Christ, who bare our sins and carried our sorrows.

2. The merchants shall bewail her. "And the merchants of the earth shall weep . . . for no man buyeth their merchandise any more." The reason of their grief seems to be their own self-interest—"no man buyeth their merchandise any more." The source of their traffic is cut off when the fountain from which it flows is dried up. The Papal system manufactured ecclesiastical wares, as relics, statues, crosses, &c., which the merchants sold to advantage; and now, when the system is overthrown, their merchandise is at discount. Who is to appreciate the wares when the system from which they emanated has collapsed? "The merchandise of gold . . . and souls of men." The goods here are of different kinds and of different value. The first four articles give the idea of the costly nature of some of these relics, as composed, perhaps, "of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and pearls." These would gratify the tastes of the rich and great. And while the merchants are selling the relics to pander to the prejudices of others, they are driving a lucrative trade for themselves. "The fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet," are another class of goods. The former was for worship, this is for wear, and refers to the dress of priests, and of all the ecclesiastical order largely, though not exclusively. When the system is no more, there is no demand for the wares. The "fine linen" for the priests, and the "purple, and silk, and scarlet" for the cardinals and Pope, would not be of the same repute. Then we have another class of goods which the merchants

would mourn over the suppression of—the “thyine wood . . . and souls of men.” The “thyine wood” grew in Lydia in Africa, and exhaled a beautiful perfume. The “vessels of ivory” would show the costliness of the wares suited to the tastes of the rich; and the variety of them, “all manner,” would show that they were of different sizes, and perhaps of different qualities of ivory, to please their customers. And the “all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,” would be adapted to a class of customers of perhaps less wealth, or less luxurious living. The “cinnamon . . . and wheat” are a fourth class of goods which would be out of demand also. The first four served as perfumes, to give effect to the worship of the system which has now come to nought, to let it be felt. It was seen in the statues and pictures. There may be a reference here to the ingredients used in the worship of the sanctuary, under the Old Law, where “sweet spices,” as “stacte, and onycha, and galbanum (Exod. xxx. 34) were used to perfume the worship, and make it felt as well as seen. The “wine” was needed in the sacrifice of the mass; the “oil,” in the anointing of the sick; the “fine flour,” in the making of the wafer; and the wheat, out of which to manufacture it. The “beasts . . . and souls of men,” represent a fifth class of merchandise which would be no longer in requisition. The “beasts and sheep” would be no longer needed for the luxurious tables of the clergy. The “horses and chariots” would be at discount, for the wealth is gone which enabled the votaries of Rome to ride about in their former splendour and equipage. The “slaves and souls of men” would be at discount also, for there would not be the same traffic in these as formerly. We think that the merchants of this commodity were of a different class from the others, namely, the kings and princes of the earth; for these merchants are called “the merchants of the earth,” and may include any branch of traffickers who may think to enrich themselves by the trade. It is well known, from *Mosheim’s Ecclesiastical History*, that from the eighth up to the tenth century kings and princes, to ingratiate themselves with the Romish Church, frequently “sold to the highest bidders” (see Mosheim Cent. 10, page 336)

"the sacred offices" of bishops and abbots. "Hence," according to this same authority, "men the most unfit and flagitious, sometimes soldiers, civil magistrates, and counts were frequently invested with spiritual offices of the highest dignity and influence." Surely this was to sell these men as slaves, putting them in an office which they were unfit for, and making their work a drudgery. This was also to sell, or enslave, their souls. Their souls were not in the work, and it was an enslaving of the soul to cause it to serve in a work which was alien to its nature. These kings and prince-merchants might lament on the fall of Babylon, that the traffic thus hitherto carried on was at an end, that there was no further demand for such an exceptional class of goods.

"And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee . . . thou shalt find them no more at all." "The fruits" refer to the perfumes and viands of the former verse. The things which were "dainty and goodly," refer to the class of merchandise in the 12th verse. All had "departed," and were to be found "no more at all." "The merchants of these things which were made rich by her shall stand afar off, for the fear of her torment." No wonder; they have come in contact with her by selling her their goods for her aggrandisement, and they are afraid of her punishment. They are "weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, that great city . . . is come to nought." Before they wailed for the loss of their traffic; now they wail for their own danger, lest it come suddenly as that of the "great city" with which they were so closely bound up.

The "fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and gold, and precious stones, and pearls," refer to the gorgeous display characteristic of the system, and which decked the officials in such grand and brilliant costume. The "gold and precious stones" would glitter on their royal-coloured garments. And yet, "in one hour," all is brought to a close. The judgment in the end is short, sharp, and sudden. Let men be warned to flee out of Babylon, that they "may not be partakers of her sins, and receive not of her plagues."

3. The traders by sea shall bewail her. "And every

shipmaster . . . cried, What city is like unto this great city!" This is another class of traders which made capital out of Rome. They may be called the merchants of the sea, as the former were called "the merchants of the earth." Both sea and land were enriched by the Romish system. This class of merchants had carried her commodities from other countries; and, as their trade is now at an end, through her fall, they mourn over the loss of their profits. A question arises here—What was this trade by which they made their profits? We answer, carrying pilgrims to and fro to the various shrines which she had set up. For example, it is said in *D'Aubigne's History of the Reformation*, that in one month, in Rome alone, in the year A.D. 1300, there were counted no less than 1,200,000 pilgrims. This would bring a large amount of profit to the traffickers by sea, besides enriching the Papal coffers. No wonder that this set of traffickers bewailed her fall. The intensity of their mourning is seen by casting "dust on their heads." The reference here is likely to Ezek. xxvii. 30, where the merchants of Tyre are referred to as doing the same for the loss of their traffic, on account of the fall of that city. But the custom is borrowed from more ancient times, as in the case of Joshua and the elders of Israel, when some of the Israelites were smitten before the men of Ai (Josh. vii. 6); and Job's three friends when they saw his grief (Job. ii. 12). These traders are in intense grief, as the matter came home to them that their profits are at an end. They say, "Alas, alas, that great city . . . in one hour is she made desolate." Not only do they bewail themselves, but all others engaged in a similar traffic, for their trade was brought to nought also. It would seem that some had a special traffic, as the carrying of her pilgrims to shrines, and the carrying her relics, as was mentioned already; but "all that had ships in the sea," carrying whatever wares, were enriched by her. "By reason of her costliness" means the abundance of her wealth. She had abundance of resources to pay all the hire and enrich the traders. Again it is repeated, "in one hour is she made desolate." The suddenness of the calamity enters also into the cause of the calamity. Their traffic is at once suspended. Though

they might have anticipated her fall as coming, and prepared for it, yet they could not persuade themselves to believe it till their trade is at once brought to nought. The lesson we learn from this is, that though God's judgments may be slow, they are sure. And this should be a warning to the impenitent to fly in time to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to take hold of his blood which cleanseth us from all sin. Faith appropriates this and makes it our own.

4. The shout of victory. "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her." The "heaven" is appealed to to rejoice over her. Her sins had reached unto heaven, and now the heaven is invoked to join in a shout of exclamation at her fall. The heaven means the heavenly inhabitants who had been witnesses of her sin. As the angels rejoice over one sinner that repenteth, the news being likely communicated to them by some of the persons of the Trinity; so we may imagine that the sin of this great system of evil was made known in the same way. And in the case of the "spirits of just men made perfect," no wonder they would rejoice on hearing the report, for many of them had seen the enormity of her crimes, especially "the saints under the altar," before they went to heaven. The angels and saints would all rejoice together that the accuser of the brethren was cast down.

The "holy apostles and prophets" are called on to rejoice. And the reason is assigned—"for God hath avenged you on her." She had slain many of them, as the Jews did the ancient prophets, and now the day of her vengeance has come. God himself hath espoused their quarrel (Rom. xii. 19). The prayer of the saints under the altar is heard—"How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth" (Chap. vi. 10)? And Babylon has drunk the bitter cup of judgment. We learn here that both heaven and earth rejoice at her fall. What a lesson! Sin is the cause of all punishment; and when it is not repented of and washed away in the blood of Jesus, how bitter is the doom! Again, it is the same voice, that of Christ (verse 4), that called them out of Babylon, which

now calls them to rejoice over her fall. He tells them that it is God who takes vengeance. The quarrel is his, not ours; and we ourselves are not to take the vengeance for the injury done us by any man, as "love your enemies" should be the prevailing motto of Christians; but the system here is doomed, and it is God that calls to the rejoicing for its overthrow.

VERSES 21-24.—*And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea . . . and in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.*

We have here Babylon's final fall, and the cause of her fall.

I.—Her fall.

1. It is with "violence." It is as if "a great millstone" had been cast "into the sea," which would sink by its own weight. And so Babylon, or Rome, would sink through her own sins. The mighty angel here is Christ himself. We are reminded that it was God himself who espoused the cause of his people, or "avenged them on her" (verse 20); and we think the "mighty angel" here is Christ himself, showing the violence with which he would dash Babylon to the ground.

2. It is final. She "shall be found no more at all." The idea of the sea is likely taken from Jer. li. 63, where the prophet commands Seraiah to cast the book containing Babylon's sins into the Euphrates, bound with a stone, that it would rise no more, as a type of Babylon's fall. So here, John describes the Lord Jesus Christ, as casting a stone like a great millstone into the sea, to foreshadow the doom of the great spiritual Babylon, that it was never to rise more. The violent and final nature of Babylon's, or Rome's, fall, may be confirmed by Matt. xviii. 6, where the offenders of Christ's "little ones," or saints, are doomed to a greater fall than if "a millstone were hanged about their necks, and they were drowned in the depth of the sea." Papal Rome, by the Inquisition, for ages was the offender of Christ's saints, having persecuted thousands of them unto the death—is it any wonder that her doom

should be violent and final? and that the comparison of her fall should be likened to "a great millstone cast into the sea"?

3. There is a picture here of her desolation. "The voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters," is gone. This refers to the music of the Papal system, which she was accustomed to use to make her services more attractive. This is gone, never to be recalled. The "craftsman" who made statuary to adorn her places of worship, and to represent before the people the likeness of saints and angels, as another mode of attraction, is gone also. "The sound of a millstone" refers to the custom that prevailed among the Jews, and in ancient Babylon, of rising early, generally before day, to grind the flour for the morning meal. The mode of grinding was the following:—Two women assisted in the operation, facing each other, turning the upper millstone with a handle, and now and then one of them, whose hand is disengaged, throws in part of the grain through a hole in the upper millstone, as occasion requires; in this way they ground till they had enough. (See *Thomson's Land and the Book*, pp. 526-27, and Matt. xxiv. 41.) Why only one "millstone"? The under one was stationary, and it was only the uppermost one that was turned and made a noise. The absence of sound depicts Rome's desolation as complete. "The light of a candle" means the light that would be needed for the purpose of grinding so early, and which was so intimately associated with it. This, together with the sound of the millstone, enlivened the house in the morning, and was a source of considerable cheerfulness. When this would be taken away darkness would ensue; and what an amount of desolation would this throw into the picture! "And the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee." This means that marriage, which is the bulwark of society, and which is designed by God to preserve a holy seed in the earth, was to be heard no more, as to its festivity, in mystic Babylon, or Rome, after her fall. The marriage ceremony was celebrated with great festivity and joy among the Jews and the ancients generally (*Eadie's Bible Cyclopædia*—Article, *Marriage*), and

usually lasted seven days, which afforded opportunity for much friendship and social relationship; and the allusion here is to the custom which now would cease, with all its joy, in the fall of the Romish system.

II.—The reason assigned for her fall.

1. The merchants of the earth contributed to it. How? They afforded the means for her self-indulgence. As we have seen already, they ministered to her pride in supplying her with a gorgeous display of statuary, and relics, and perfumes, and vestments. These, and other luxuries, in the way of living—the one pandering to her mind, and the other to her body—made her forget herself, and lifted her off from leaning on Christ alone and his finished work in spiritual things; and from being satisfied with the ordinary necessities of life in temporal things, and led to her ruin. They made her to boast, “I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.” These very traffickers, who led her to her elevation, were the means of her fall. “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.” How did her merchants, “as the great men of the earth,” effect this? Their very greatness had its special influence. We are to remember, that when commenting on the last clause of verse 13, we said that some of her merchants were the princes and kings who sold the sacred livings of the Church, now and again, to soldiers and other professional men of the world, who had no fitness for the sacred calling, but were made slaves by it, as serving in an office for which they were not fit. And this simony, by these “great men,” did eat as a canker into the body-politic of the Church, marring her beauty, and in the end consuming her. We read in 2 Samuel vi. 7, that Uzzah was slain by God for putting wanton hands on the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark should have been carried on the shoulders of the Levites, as we learn from 1 Chron. xv. 15, instead of being drawn by oxen, and should have been concealed from the public gaze by a covering, and Uzzah should have known better than to have allowed it to be drawn by oxen, and therefore God smote him, to teach David and the people due reverence for sacred things. Is it any wonder that when the Church of Rome allowed such a traffic of sacred things to be

carried on, and men so disqualified to discharge her sacred functions and to dispense her ordinances, that God would make a breach on her, and bring her to the dust?

2. Her sorceries contributed to it. "For by her sorceries were all nations deceived." This word "sorceries," is the same which is used in Chap. ix. 21 to describe all the supposed virtue of relics, and crosses, and charms, and rosaries, which abound to such an extent in the Romish Church, and with which she had "deceived all nations." I may remark, it is the same in the original Greek which is used here also. By such means she imposed on the credibility of the nations, and inspired them with veneration for her religious rites and ceremonies. Depending on these, and looking to these instead of to Christ, and entire dependence on his finished work for justification, and on the Holy Spirit for sanctification, she fell from her lofty pinnacle and became level with the ground.

3. Her persecutions. "And in her was found the blood of prophets . . . all that dwelt on the earth." She persecuted unto the death by the Inquisition and otherwise, so that it is said not less than fifty millions of Protestants have been slaughtered by her within the last 600 years of her history. The word "all," here, is not to be taken in its universal sense, for many were slain on the earth whom Rome had no hand in slaying, but in all "the earth" where she had the power multitudes were her victims. No wonder that as Jerusalem and the Jewish nation fell, from having shed all the righteous blood "upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias," so would Rome fall, from the same cause, by persecuting the saints. The massacres of Papal Rome have already been referred to (see remarks on Chap. xvii. 6), and it may well be said of her, "in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." What a lesson of warning we have from Rome's fall! "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. x. 12).

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XVIII.

1. Who is this "angel"?—We think he is the Holy Spirit.
2. Why the Holy Spirit?—Because there is such identity between the utterance here, and that of the angel in Chap. v. 2, who is evidently the Holy Spirit.
3. Why is he called "another angel"?—As different from "one of the seven angels" (Chap. xvii. 1).
4. Why is he represented as "having great power"?—Because he has authority to proclaim the doom of Babylon.
5. What is the meaning of "the earth being lightened with his glory"?—After the fall of Rome, the mystic Babylon, the earth will be lightened with the glory of the Holy Spirit, accompanying the Gospel in an extraordinary manner.
6. Why is he represented as "crying with a strong voice"?—That the universe might hear. Heaven and earth had been witness to her sin, and they are summoned to see her fall.
7. Why does she become so polluted in her fall?—As ancient Babylon (Isa. xiii. 19-22), of which Rome is the representative, became the "hold" of everything that was foul and unclean in her fall, so Rome would become the same in her fall.
8. How is she "become the habitation of devils and the hold of every foul spirit"?—(See answer on Questions 33 and 35, Chap. xvi.)
9. How is she a "cage of every unclean and hateful bird"?—As certain birds were regarded as the precursors of ill omens to the heathen, John sees in her fall a greater declension than she had yet fallen from, and the forebodings of her utter ruin.
10. What was the cause of her *first fall*?—"All nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."
11. What are we to understand by this expression?—It means that as Rome was the mart of nations, all parties frequenting it in the way of commerce were indoctrinated or intoxicated with her false doctrines and superstitions and sensational worship.
12. How did "the kings of the earth commit fornication with her"?—As the kings came into contact with her, by her favourite positions for commerce, they have imbibed her spirit, and have fallen into her idolatrous and mystic rites.
13. How did "the merchants of the earth wax rich through her delicacies"?—These have made a fortune by selling her relics and images and pictures.
14. Whose is this "other voice from heaven," crying, "Come out

of her"?—It seems to be the voice of Jesus Christ himself, warning men of the doom of those found in Rome when her final crash comes, as he calls them "my people."

15. What is the cause of her *second fall*?—"Her sins have reached unto heaven."

16. What is implied in the expression, "God hath remembered her iniquities."?—Retributive justice for her sins.

17. Why does this "voice" say, "Reward her even as she rewarded you," when Jesus says (Matt. v. 44) "Love your enemies"?—The command is not to private individuals, but to those employed of God to deal with this system, as the enemy of his people, and to punish Rome for her crimes, even to the "double."

18. What is meant by the "cup which she has filled."?—The cup of punishment which she caused many of the saints to drink.

19. Why is it to be filled "to her double"?—To show that "the wrath of God is to be revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," and that the vengeance is God's and not man's. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. xii. 19).

20. What is the meaning of her living "deliciously"?—There is a reference here to verse 3, in which she lived in luxury by selling statues, and pictures, and relics; and her avengers, as passive instruments in God's hands, are to give her "torment and sorrow."

21. What is meant by her boast, "I sit a queen," &c.?—She prided herself as being a queen among the nations, and that she would never be brought into widowhood or sorrow, which teaches us that "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

22. What is the meaning of her being "utterly burned with fire"?—Her complete destruction from the earth, which is her *second fall* and final doom.

23. How did the kings of the earth "commit fornication and live deliciously with her"?—By bowing to her idols, and worshipping her images, and selling her sacred offices for gain.

24. What is meant by "the smoke of her burning"?—Her last utter overthrow, indicated by the smoke of a great burning.

25. Why are the kings represented as "standing afar off"?—Lest they might share in her punishment.

26. Why is Rome called "Babylon"?—Like Babylon in her iniquity and Babylon in her fall. As Babylon's fall came suddenly, so does hers.

27. Why did the merchants "so weep and mourn over her"?—Because the gain of their traffic in images and relics is dried up with her fall.

28. How are the merchandise distinguished here?—Some of the relics were costly, as the first four in the list, and adapted to the rich; some of the merchandise was for clothing, as ecclesiastical wear.

29. What kind of merchandise was the "thyine wood"?—It was a wood that grew in Africa, and had a beautiful perfume, which was much sought after.

30. What was the use of the ivory vessels?—They were suited to the tastes of the rich, and their variety was suited to the size of every place where they were deposited.

31. For whom were the "vessels of most precious wood, and brass, and iron, and marble," suited?—A less wealthy class, who could not purchase the ivory.

32. What was the use of the "cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense"?—For perfumes in their worship, to make it to be felt; it was seen in their statues and pictures; here its influence is felt.

33. What was the use of the "wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat"?—The wine was needed in the eucharist; the oil, in anointing the sick; the fine flour, in the making of the wafer; and the wheat, for supplying the material.

34. What were the "beasts and sheep" for?—For the tables of the clergy; and when the system fell these were at discount.

35. What use were the horses and chariots?—For the rich, in which to ride about in their splendour.

36. How did the traffic of "slaves and souls of men" cease by Rome's fall, and that "no man bought them any more"?—The "slaves," or "bodies and souls of men," were no longer in repute for gain by Rome's fall, for kings, to ingratiate themselves with Rome, often sold men for sacred offices for which they were not fit (see *Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History*, Cent. 10, page 336), enslaving their bodies, and making them serve in such offices, to the enslaving of their souls.

37. What is meant by the "fruits"?—The perfumes and viands of the former verse.

38. What is meant by the "things which were dainty and goodly"?—The class of merchandise in the 12th verse.

39. What is the cause of the "wailing" of the merchants now?—Their own danger, lest punishment come on them as on Rome.

40. What is the meaning of the "city" being "clothed in fine linen . . . and decked with gold," &c.?—The gorgeous display characteristic of the Romish system, and the official dress of its priests.

41. What is meant by "one hour"?—The suddenness of her fall.

42. Who are meant by "every shipmaster, and all the company in ships," &c., mourning her fall?—Those who carried pilgrims to Romish shrines, and made money out of the system by sea traffic, would lament their loss by her fall.

43. Give an instance of this mode of merchandise?—It is stated in *D'Aubigne's History of the Reformation*, that in one month, in Rome alone, in A.D. 1300, there were counted no less than 1,200,000 pilgrims from different countries.

44. What is the meaning of their "casting dust on their heads"?—To signify the intensity of their grief, as the merchants of Tyre for their loss in the fall of that city (Ezek. xxvii. 30).

45. How are we to understand the expression, "By reason of her costliness"?—The abundance of her wealth to pay all the costs of the traders.

46. Why is the heaven appealed to to "rejoice over her"?—Because her sins had reached unto heaven.

47. Why are the "holy apostles and prophets" called on to "rejoice"?—Because she had slain many of them, and God has now espoused their quarrel.

48. Who commands them to "rejoice over her"?—The same voice as that of verse 4, which we interpreted to be Christ's.

49. Then the rejoicing is not prompted by their own vindictive spirit?—No; they are commanded to do so by the highest power, showing that the quarrel is God's.

50. Who is this "mighty angel" who cast the "stone" into the seas, as the emblem of Rome's fall?—We think the Lord Jesus Christ himself, whose voice called his people out of her (verse 4), and now pronounces her violent and final doom.

51. Why is the stone compared to a "millstone"?—To show the weight of the fall, and that she will no more rise again than a millstone cast into the sea.

52. What is meant by the voice of the various musicians being removed?—That her music would be no more used to attract.

53. What is the meaning of the "craftsmen being removed"?—That the men who made the statuary to adorn her places of worship were no longer needed.

54. What is the meaning of the "sound of the millstone being no more heard"?—This refers to the grinding of the flour for the morning meal (Matt. xxiv. 41); and the silence refers to Rome's desolation as complete.

55. What is understood by "the light of the candle" gone?—The candle was associated with the grinding before day, and the absence of this also would indicate her darkness as well as her desolation.

56. What is meant by the absence of "the bridegroom and the bride"?—That marriage, which is the bulwark of society, and which was celebrated with such festivity and joy, would cease in her, and add to her ruin.

57. How did the merchants contribute to her fall?—By pampering her in luxury through their traffic, which led her to forget herself, and to cease leaning on God's providence and Christ's finished work.

58. How were "all nations deceived by her sorceries"?—By her relics and charms and rosaries she imposed on all nations, and seduced them into sin.

59. How "was the blood of all slain on the earth found in her"?—She is credited with having slain, in the last 600 years, fifty millions of Protestants, and in all the earth, where she had the power, multitudes were her victims.

CHAPTER XIX.

THIS chapter contains the song of praise consequent on the fall of Babylon, or the Romish system; the marriage of the Lamb with his spouse, the Church; the war of Christ and his armies against the nations that are opposed to him; and the feast of the fowls of heaven on the flesh of the slain.

VERSES 1-6.—*And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying . . . the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*

Another stage in the great drama of the history of the Papacy has been reached. The seventh vial has been poured out, and she has fallen never to rise again. Christ, by her fall, has got one great victory over the nations. It is a great step towards the subjugation of the world under his sway, and other steps by-and-by will be made, till the whole is brought under his reign. Antichrist has long opposed him, but here one form of it is completely prostrated. We have in these verses the song consequent on the fall of Babylon, the singers, and the chorus.

I.—The song.

It contains four stanzas—"salvation, and honour, and glory, and power." It is introduced by the word "Alleluia," which means, Praise ye Jehovah. It is the same song, though in somewhat different words, which was sung by the shepherds (Luke ii. 13, 14) announcing the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. And is it any wonder that the same song should be sung at Babylon's overthrow which inaugurated the reign that led to that overthrow? With Christ's coming was introduced the Gospel, which smote the great colossal system of Rome and brought it to the ground. This system long hindered

the Gospel; but like two contending currents of fresh water and of salt, the latter gained the victory, as being the weightier; so the Gospel will be in the end, and is now, more than a match for all contending false systems, "for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. i. 16).

1. "Salvation." This points to the incarnation of Christ, in assuming our nature, becoming our surety, and undertaking the work of man's salvation. No wonder that the heavenly hosts of the redeemed sing this song, for it is through him who is the subject of it they have attained the privilege of singing it. God provided this salvation by giving and sending his only-begotten Son (John iii. 16). Jesus Christ procured this salvation by living for us and dying for us. The Holy Spirit applies it by working faith in us, and enabling us to lay hold on it. It is for all them that believe. Note.—Let it be ours to entreat this Holy Spirit to enable us to lay hold on it by a living faith, and to have this faith, which is the evidence of its possession, working by love and overcoming the world.

2. "Glory." This is the second part of the song, and a very appropriate part of the song of the redeemed. The angels on Bethlehem's plains shouted, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men," when Christ was born; no wonder that the heavenly choir of the redeemed should now reiterate the same song, when, by Christ's salvation, God can be "just, and the justifier of them who believe in Jesus." God's glory shines out in that he has overthrown that great Papal system, the corrupter of the nations, and avenged the blood of his saints at her hand.

3. "Honour." Honour is to be ascribed to the Father, in that he provided salvation for sinners in sending his only-begotten and well-beloved Son to die for sinners. Honour to Christ the Son, for the price laid down for our ransom, even his own precious blood. God is to be honoured, for we had no claims on him in providing this ransom. Christ is to be honoured, "for when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. v. 6).

4. "Power." This would appear to refer especially to the Holy Ghost, as it is through his power that the Gospel is rendered efficacious to the salvation of the sinner. Jesus said to his disciples (Acts i. 8), "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." And the success of the Gospel in subduing men's hearts, and bringing them into subjection to King Jesus, is emphatically the work of the Holy Spirit (Rom. xv. 18, 19). Hence the burden of this song is to be ascribed to God in Trinity, "unto the Lord our God." He is "our God." God the Father provides this salvation; God the Son works it out; God the Spirit applies it, and makes it our own. Well may "salvation, and glory, and honour, and power" be ascribed to God in Trinity, "unto the Lord our God."

II.—The singers.

1. "Much people." "I heard," says John, "a voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia," &c. There will be "much people" in heaven at the fall of the Romish system to join in this acclaim of its downfall. The "much people," may mean those who suffered through its persecuting tendency, and who now rejoice that its power for persecution is at an end. The text does not say that all heaven joined in the singing of this song, for there are many there who were in nowise connected with this system; but John seems to particularise the "much people" from the others who, in all probability, have been the victims of its cruelties, and who raise their voice high as they repeat the "Alleluia," not in a revengeful spirit, but in thanksgiving, that its opportunity for persecution and oppression was at an end for ever. The system is called here, by these singers, "the great whore," in allusion to her "fornications;" and it enters into their song that God had avenged their blood at her hand. They are thankful that he has espoused their quarrel, though the delay may have appeared long. God says (Rom. xii. 19), "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." This should teach us that we should not take the quarrel in our own hands, but leave it to God, who in his own time, and in his own way, will espouse the quarrel of his people.

He will deal out retributive justice, however long it may be coming, except they repent, to his people's enemies. (See, for explanation of "the great whore," Chap. xvii. 1.) And again they said, "Alleluia." As we stated already, they repeated the "Alleluia," as "her smoke rose up for ever and ever." Not that they rejoice in this, for there can be no rejoicing at punishment in heaven, but that God has taken their quarrel into his own hands, and that her opportunity for persecution, as we said, was at an end.

2. "The four and twenty elders and the four beasts." The "elders" are the representatives of the priests under the old law; and the "beasts," or living creatures, the representatives of the ministers under the Gospel—(see Chap. iv. 4-6). The priests and the ministers rejoice at the overthrow of the "Mystery of Iniquity," for nothing had so interfered with the success of the Gospel as this system. It tried to oppose its progress at every step, as every one knows who has come in contact with it. And it is no wonder that both the priests and the ministers "fell down and worshipped God who sat on the throne, saying, Amen, Alleluia," in that her power in this respect had come to an end.

3. The voice out of the throne. This would appear to be that of the angel, whom he afterwards fell down to worship (verse 10), but probably one of the redeemed, encouraging the "elders and the beasts" in their song of praise to God for his mighty deliverance. It was likely John Baptist's voice, encouraging them to this act of devotion, saying, "Praise our God all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great," as when the Levites praised God at the time the temple was filled with the glory of God (2 Chron. v. 13). It is not strange that the "voice" should call on the elders and four beasts, with whom the speaker was so intimately connected, to worship God for this grand deliverance. Why John Baptist's voice more than any other of the redeemed? We think because he is the recording angel of Chap. i. 1; and again, God uses him not only to encourage in praise, but to remind John to write. He calls him "our God," showing that he is one of the redeemed, and joins himself in the chorus.

III.—The chorus.

The voice of the great multitude joins with the others. All the voices blended together, like that of many waters and mighty thunderings, take up the refrain, "Alleluia," on the ground that "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth," having cast down from her lofty seat the persecutor of his saints and the opposer of his Gospel. It must have been a grand swell of praise when it is compared to the "voice of many waters," from its blending cadences falling on the ear, and to the "mighty thunderings," from the powerful effect it produced. The glory is ascribed here to God as having all power, "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." He has all power to stem the tempest when it rages too furiously, and to cast down the Romish Babylon when she has risen to her full height. Let us be thankful that the time will come, though it may not be in our day, when this system will come to an end, and when the Gospel shall have free course and be glorified.

Lessons.—1. Warning. To come out from this system which is thus to be cast as a millstone into the mighty waters, to be consumed with the Spirit of God's mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of his coming. 2. Encouragement. That God will espouse the quarrel of his saints in his own time, and in his own way, "for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

VERSES 7-9.—*Let us be glad and rejoice . . . These are the true sayings of God.*

We have in these verses—

I.—"The marriage of the Lamb" with "his wife," the Church.

This produced a festive occasion, as marriages did in the East, and do still in most countries, with which the chorus is still kept up, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come." The question arises—Was not Christ already married to the Church from the time he gave himself for her, that he might sanctify it . . . present her to himself

a glorious Church, not having "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Ephes. v. 25-27)? and even to the ancient Jewish Church, which persecuted him, in types and figures, as worthy of his affection? True; but it was only to the invisible Church, to distinguish her under both dispensations from the outward visible Church, as washed in his blood. But now that the so-called visible Church—the Church of Rome—had proved unworthy of his love, and had fallen from her high position, which prepared the way for the Millennium; and lest it might be thought by the ungodly world that the relationship had been dissolved, he lets them see that he is still the bridegroom of the true Church, and that the new relationship is only a confirmation of the old love. The true Church is now purified from the errors that surrounded her; and, walking in the light of the Gospel, the marriage is a fulfilment of the prophecy, "The heathen shall be given to him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession" (Psa. ii. 8).

1. It is a royal marriage. The bridegroom is the King of kings (verse 16). When a royal marriage takes place at the court of earthly kings, it is expected to be on a grand scale, and in proportion to the dignity of the betrothed parties. Here it is between Christ and his Church; and so it is on a right royal scale. The bridegroom is not only King of kings, he is Lord of lords; and his wife is the Church purchased with his own blood, all its members being "kings and priests unto God."

2. It can be kept back no longer. Rome, for a long time, hindered the new nuptials, but now, this being out of the way, the solemnization of the marriage proceeds, not only with honour, but with pleasure.

3. It is with the consent of both parties. Christ, the "Lamb," is willing, for in undertaking the salvation of the Church he says, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God" (Psa. xl. 7, 8). His wife is willing—she "hath made herself ready." She is eager to enter into the alliance; and no wonder, with such a royal and heavenly bridegroom. Not that she is naturally willing, for the carnal mind is enmity against God (Rom. viii. 7), but she

is made willing by the power of the Holy Spirit. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power" (Psa. cx. 3).

II.—The dress of the bride.

"Fine linen, clean and white." This is Christ's righteousness. It is not her own, for it is "granted" her, as a gift (Rom. v. 17); and thus she looks comely through the dress of the bridegroom (Ezek. xvi. 14). But it means more here than mere dress, or the righteousness of Christ imputed, for the word "righteousness," in the original Greek, is plural, and would imply also that the Church is now justified publicly from the false accusations brought against her by Antichrist and every false system, and freed from the many severe decrees by which she had been kept so long under the ban of grinding tyranny. And it is stated here that "the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." It not only justifies the Church in the sight of God, but before the world, from the accusations of heresy, and schism, and false doctrine, for which she was so long persecuted by the Romish system. This marriage gives her a standing now before the world which she never had before, and vindicates her innocence of the crimes laid to her charge.

1. The dress is all of a piece. It is like Christ's own coat, "woven from the top throughout," and it is "unto all and upon all them that believe" (Rom. iii. 22).

2. It has no mixture in it. It is not part our own and part Christ's. There is no linsey-wolsey here; every thread of this dress is composed of Christ's obedience unto death, or his righteousness (Titus iii. 5, 6). Besides, it is "fine linen." This implies its costliness. It was none other than the Son of God who yielded the obedience which constitutes this righteousness. It was the Lord of glory who was crucified. There are no rough spots on it, for the weaver, and the loom in which it was woven, were all perfection.

3. It is "clean and white." No stains are seen on it, for Christ was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." How does the bride, or the Church, get it? It is made over to her as a gift (Rom. v. 17); and

made over to every sinner as soon as he believes (2 Cor. v. 21). This is the righteousness which David speaks of (Rom. iv. 6), which is imputed in justification and imparted in sanctification.

III.—The happiness of the guests invited to the marriage.

“Blessed are they that are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.” The matter is of such importance that John is commanded to “write” the fact. The command comes from the same voice as that mentioned in the 5th verse, namely, that of John the Baptist, as we think, commanding John to write. Surely it is a great privilege to be called to the marriage supper of such an exalted personage as the “Lamb,” who is “King of kings and Lord of lords.” And no wonder that John is reminded by the “voice out of the throne” to announce the blessedness of those who enjoy this privilege, or who are the invited guests. The “called” in the text, means the effectually called of the Gospel; for all who receive the outward call of the Gospel do not avail themselves of the invitation. The “called” here then evidently means those who have accepted the invitation, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, and who have come in to the wedding. They had experienced the “holy calling” mentioned in 2 Tim. i. 9, and did come out from the world to “the marriage supper of the Lamb,” or the blessings of the covenant of grace. Note.—It should be the earnest prayer of those who hear the general call of the Gospel, that the Holy Spirit would persuade and enable them to embrace the invitation, that the outward call might become to them the effectual call.

Those that are thus called have—

1. Happiness in life. They get all the blessings of the new covenant here—justification, adoption, and sanctification, &c.; and even their trials are made to redound to their happiness, for “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Rom. viii. 28).

2. Happiness in death. Jesus Christ will go with them through the dark valley and shadow of death. “Though

I walk," says David, "through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Psa. xxiii. 4).

3. Happiness throughout eternity. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Chap. xxi. 4). They sing the song of redeeming love (Chap. i. 5, 6); "and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Chap. xxii. 5). "And he saith unto me, "These are the true sayings of God." The words are emphatic, and are encouraging to all who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and should stimulate all to seek to be guests at this royal marriage, and to be the subjects of the union between Christ and his bride, the Church, which will never be dissolved.

VERSES 10-16.—*And I fell at his feet to worship him . . . He hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*

These verses set forth—

1. John's resolve to worship this personage. (1) We have here the tendency of human nature to revere a heavenly inhabitant. And Rome's worship of angels is just the outcome of this tendency, when it is not restrained by the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. This personage is, we presume, the same as that mentioned in Chap. i. 1, who was sent by Jesus Christ to communicate to John his Revelation. (2) How faithfully the angel deals with him. "See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus." The angel explains to John who he is, and dissuades him from committing an act of idolatry. He says to him, "Worship God." No creature, as I am, is an object of worship. God alone is that object. I am only a creature like yourself, a "fellow-servant," and one of your "brethren that have the testimony of Jesus." Take care what you do. Give not the honour which ought to be given to God to any creature. Who this angel was—whether the spirit of

John the Baptist, as some conjecture, or some other of the redeemed ones, we cannot tell, as it is not revealed to us, but he is a faithful messenger of the behests of his Lord and Master. He goes on to explain—"The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." That is, the testimony, or the witness, which the prophets and apostles bore to Jesus—that he was God from eternity—that in the fulness of time he assumed our nature, and became incarnate, died for our sins, and rose again for our justification, and ever liveth to make intercession for us. And this "testimony is the spirit of prophecy." This is the very essence of what the prophets and apostles taught (Isa. liii. 5; Micah v. 2; Rom. iv. 24, 25; 1 Pet. ii. 24). We learn from this act of John how little we know of the heavenly world here below, till it is revealed to us. John, here, was going to make a great mistake till he is corrected by the angel. Let us confine ourselves to what is revealed to us in the Scriptures of the other world and its heavenly inhabitants, and then we cannot go astray. Well is it that we have the Scriptures for our guide.

2. Christ's battle against the nations. In fighting this battle he is represented—(1) On "a white horse." We had an account of the opening of heaven in Chap. iv. 1, and here it is repeated in connexion with Christ's mission as a preacher, showing the importance of this opening, and that heaven is alive to the event. The "white horse" is the emblem of the Gospel messenger, going to-and-fro with speed, conquering and to conquer. And Jesus Christ is the Prince of preachers, going forth at their head, for "the armies in heaven followed him on white horses." Indeed he calls himself the sower of "the good seed" of the Gospel (Matt. xiii. 37). The horse is represented as "white," denoting the purity which should characterize the Gospel ministers. Christ at their head is himself pure, and the same becomes his ministers. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord" (Isa. lii. 11).

"And he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True." The meaning of this is, that he is faithful and true to his promises in an emphatic and special manner, for the words are set forth in capitals, intimating that he alone is able to fulfil these promises. They are all "Yea" and

"Amen" in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. i. 20). This is a great encouragement to us. He says (Matt. xi. 28), "Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest." He that hath made this promise, and other promises, is "faithful and true," and will fulfil them to the very letter. Let us ask grace and the aid of the Holy Spirit to come to him; and "him that cometh unto me," he says, "I will in no wise cast out." "And in righteousness he doth judge and make war." His war against the nations is righteous and just, for they have sinned and rebelled against him, "and in righteousness" he must take vengeance on them if they refuse to repent and submit to his sway as their rightful sovereign. (2) His eyes are as a flame of fire. This indicates the majestic nature of his appearance. "Fire" has something grand and terrible about it. As a King, Christ is grand; as a Judge, he is terrible. The leading idea seems to be the unfolding to the light whatever was concealed in darkness. As fire brings to the light whatever was hidden in darkness, so Christ, as a judge, detects, by "his eyes as a flame of fire," the secret wickedness of the ungodly and impenitent, and brings them in justice to the light of day to have their sins exposed and punished. He is represented in the same capacity (Chap. i. 14), and his whole description in the context is grand and imposing in the extreme.

3. "And on his head were many crowns." This means souls won through redemption by his blood, which shall shine as diadems in his crown. As in the king's crown precious stones stand out to embellish it, so Christ's crown is studded with many jewels, as trophies of redeeming love. Though as a Priest he won them in offering up his sacrifice, yet as a King he wears them in his crown, in honour of victory gained over sin and Satan, whose aim was to have enslaved them. As David added crown after crown to his own, when he took them from the monarchs whom he had overcome in battle, so Christ has been adding crown after crown to his own head, as he conquers, through the Gospel, this and that other soul to himself in the battle against sin and Satan. And he goes on conquering and to conquer. And in the Millennium, of which his present warfare against the nations is only an

earnest, he shall gather many more souls as crowns, so that the number of the redeemed shall be so great that no man can number them.

4. His name. It seems to be mysterious. "No man knew it but he himself." In Judges xiii. 18, when the angel appears to Manoah, he asked him what was his name. And the angel answers, "It is secret," or "wonderful," the designation given to the Lord Jesus Christ (Isa. ix. 6). And this plainly shows that the angel of Manoah was Christ in his pre-existent state, and the same personage as that mentioned here, whose "name no man knew but he himself." This name, moreover, points significantly to "Immanuel, God with us." No one knows it but he himself, yet it points to his incarnation; and though he dwelt with the Father before all worlds (Prov. viii. 22, 23), in "time he was made of a woman . . . to redeem them that were under the law" (Gal. iv. 4).

5. His dress. "He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood." His kingly power, as a conqueror, appears to be kept up, but the allusion seems rather to refer to his priestly office, in offering sacrifice and completing a righteousness which he sealed with his own blood, or as the text has it, "it was dipped in blood," which gave him power against his enemies. It was "through death," or blood (Heb. ii. 14), that "he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil." And coming up "from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah" (Isa. lxiii. 1-3), he still brings disaster to his enemies.

6. The name revealed. "The Word of God." It is through this name God often reveals himself. It is through him, as a Mediator, that he reveals himself as a God of mercy consistently with his justice; and it is through him that he emphatically reveals himself as a God of mercy, in sending him to die for sinners. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. v. 19). He is called the Word in John i. 1, and i. 14. The Bible is called the Word of God in Chap. i. 2, as revealing God's mind, and may not that be the reason why here Christ is called the "Word of God," as revealing to us God's mercy and love?

7. His attendants. "And the armies which were in

heaven followed him upon white horses." These are the preachers of the Gospel, as "heaven" here must mean the Gospel kingdom. Jesus was a preacher himself. He went forth on his mission, when here below, to conquer the world by the power of the Gospel; and his ministers still go on this same errand. The white horses indicate the speed with which they should pursue their mission, as well as the purity which should characterize them. They are also represented as "clothed in fine linen, white and clean." The "fine linen" sets forth the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, with which his faithful ministers are clothed, and which is an indispensable qualification for their work. Those who recommend this righteousness to others must be clothed with it themselves. We would not say that an unconverted minister is never the means of the conversion of others—for that would be making the success of the work to depend on the messenger and not on the message—but we hold that an unconverted minister is not likely to be successful as a preacher, as dry wood seldom kindles the fire. The "fine linen, white and clean," designated "the righteousness of the saints" (verse 8), was the clothing of the bride, the Lamb's wife, and here the same clothing, with its characteristic qualities, is that in which the preachers are arrayed whom Christ selects for the conversion and edification of that very bride, which is his Church.

There is a solemn lesson here to those who would be preachers of the Gospel. Before they undertake this mission they should see well to it that they have this indispensable clothing for the Christian ministry. It is "white and clean," and those who have it have clean hands and a pure heart. Where there is the righteousness of Christ in justification, there will be the holiness of the Spirit in sanctification.

8. His armour for war. "Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword to smite the nations." This is the Gospel, which is "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations . . . and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. x. 4, 5). The nations are made to bow in subjection unto it. The heathen are to be "given to Christ

for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." And this is to be accomplished by the preaching of the Gospel, or the Word of God, which "is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword," &c. (Heb. iv. 12). Not only does he conquer his people by the power of his word, but he conquers his enemies by the power of his arm. "He shall rule them with a rod of iron." This is in reference to Psalms ii. 9, where he shall "break" his enemies, the heathen, who refuse to yield to his word, "with a rod of iron; he shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." "And he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." This has a reference to the treading out of the grapes at the winepress to extract the wine (Isa. lxiii. 2, 3). The winepress of the wrath of God means his anger against the rebellious nations. As the treader of the grapes extracted the wine from them, so the Lord Jesus Christ, while the Saviour of all who come to him, and all who trust in him, will, as a judge, execute the Father's wrath on all the unbelieving and rebellious subjects. The Father has committed all judgment unto the Son. "He shall dash his enemies to pieces like a potter's vessel." Christ, as King and Judge, will inflict the wrath of the Almighty on them. What a lesson for us in time to "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry . . . when once his anger is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him" (Psa. ii. 12).

9. His inscription on his vesture and on his thigh. It is "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." This inscription exhibits his regal authority with the greatest prominence; for as the high priest of old" (Exod. xxviii. 36) had on his mitre, or head-dress, "Holiness to the Lord," to distinguish him particularly as a priest, so Christ has this inscription to distinguish him particularly as a King. There are many earthly kings, but Christ rules over them all. There are "gods many and lords many," but Christ is the true God and the living God.

Mark, the inscription is engraven "on his vesture and on his thigh." The vesture, we think, denotes his kingly robe, which showed him invested with royal authority. But the inscription is not only "on his vesture," but "on

his thigh." Why on his thigh? The allusion seems to be to the custom of inscribing the names of conquerors on their garments and weapons; and as the sword hung on the thigh the name was inscribed on the thigh where it hung, or on the sword itself, that all might see that with "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God," he gains the victory.

VERSES 17-21.—*And I saw an angel standing in the sun . . . and all the fowls were filled with the flesh.*

These verses set forth the battle waged against Christ and his army by the worldly power. The worldly power comprises "the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies."

1. The time of its commencement. It began when God set up a Church on earth, but it began in right earnest at the Gospel dispensation. The Jews resisted Christ's kingdom, and fought stoutly against him and his messengers. The ten Pagan persecutions after that wasted many of the Lord's saints, and tried to pluck the crown from the head of King Immanuel. Antichrist next, conspiring in the shape of Romanism and Mahometanism, has since waged a deadly war against Christ and his people by the Inquisition, and Interdicts, and bigoted fanaticism, so much so, that as it has been stated, there had perished by the Papacy alone, within the last 600 years, about fifty millions of God's saints. But the tide turns, and Christ, at the head of his army on white horses, permits the tide of war to overthrow the Jewish nation, by the Romans; the Romans, in their turn, to be overthrown by the Goths and the Vandals, &c.; the Spanish Armada to be overthrown by the waves and the winds of heaven; France to be prostrated by the sword of Germany; and lately, the Mahometan power to be left bleeding by the arms of the Russians. No wonder that the angel might cry to the fowls of heaven, "Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God."

"Who is this angel"? We think likely the Lord Jesus Christ, represented as "in the sun" for his brightness, and probably in allusion to his transfiguration (Matt,

xvii. 2). And as he had been described by John as a conqueror, it is natural that he should now appear on the scene and give direction as to what should be done with the spoils of the battles gained over his enemies, that they should be a prey to the fowls. What are we to understand by "the fowls"? They have likely two meanings, a literal and a categorical meaning. The literal fowls would prey upon the carnage of the literal wars waged between truth and error, as at the Reformation, and against the Waldenses and Albigenses. And the categorical fowls would represent, as Dr. Glasgow says in his Commentary on this Book, the secular philosophy in various forms, that preys on the false systems of Romanism and Mahometanism, exposing their superstitions, and helping, under the Gospel, to their overthrow.

By the wars, permitted by the great Captain at the head of his armies, the ground has been prepared by the literal wars for the seed of the Word, which is to issue in a harvest of souls, who shall wage a spiritual war with the forces of Romanism and Mahometanism, and every other false system. Why is this carnage of war called "the supper of the great God"? As the supper was the principal meal among the ancients, so this is a great feast for the fowls of heaven to feed on—the carnage of war. It is "the supper of the great God," as he has permitted it to happen, as a punishment, on his enemies. He makes the wrath of man to praise him, and to the remainder of that wrath he sets restraining bounds. "Kings and captains and mighty men," together with their "horses" which carried them to battle, are to be given as a prey to the fowls of heaven to feed on. Such is the fate of the enemies of the Lord. Well is it said that "with his sharp sword he shall smite the nations and rule them with a rod of iron." Let the enemies of the King tremble, and "Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and they perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him" (Psa. ii. 12).

2. The time of its ending. When "the beast and the false prophet shall have been taken out of the way;" or, in other words, when Romanism and Mahometanism shall have been overthrown. The beginning of the end of

Rome's downfall commenced visibly with the destruction of the temporal power of the Pope, in A.D. 1870; and the beginning of the end of Mahometanism has commenced visibly with the overthrow of her power by the Russian arms in A.D. 1878, and Turkey being placed under the protectorate of Great Britain. The "beast" here means Papal Rome, which had its origin in Pagan Rome, and means the second monster. The first monster was Pagan Rome, but its principles have been largely adopted and maintained by its successor, Papal Rome, in its persecution and destructive tendencies. "The kings of the earth and their armies" lent Rome their aid in a crusade against Christ and his saints, or against "him that sat on the horse, and against his army." See here how the world-power is mustered against the spiritual power; but the issue of the battle is not long doubtful; the world-power with all its might is soon foiled. Who has ever measured swords with Christ and succeeded? "The beast was taken, and with him the false prophet . . . these both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

"The false prophet" means Mahomet, with his persecuting system called Mahometanism. This system has also long persecuted Christ and his saints as Romanism did. The system of Mahometanism has "wrought miracles before him" (the beast), which means that Mahometanism has tried to propagate its course with pretended miracles as well as Rome. They have long run in parallel lines, and they are to have a common doom in the end. Mahometanism imposed on the credulity of its followers as well as Rome on hers. Mahomet pretended to have a message from heaven from the angel Gabriel to propagate his system; and in some of the ramifications of his system, as Mormonism and spirit-rapping, it pretends to a knowledge of the spirit-world and superhuman vision, by which it deceives the unwary. In this way "he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image." Here is one false system trying to impose on another, and to make capital for itself, and converts for itself at the expense of the other. Is not this like what is done in the world still? one set of deceivers trying to impose on the other, and take advantage of the

other for their own ends. And Mahometanism, with the aid of infidelity, has been often trying, at the expense of Romanism, to expose the hollowness of the latter system, with its images and pictures and image-worship, and thus advance its own interests. It tries to deceive the devotees of Rome by the superiority of its own system and its own worship. Thus there is a struggle for mastery of the two creeds, which will make the more capital out of the other. The one is letting its sophistry of false doctrine shine before the other that it may be dazzled with the glare; and Mahometanism has so far succeeded over its rival, to the extent that it has actually "deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image." (See, for explanation of the "mark of the beast and his image," Chap. xiii. 14-17; xiv. 9).

1. Their doom. "These both were cast into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." This is the fearful end of the impenitent. When they continue in their sin, and all the proclamations of mercy from God are rejected, this is the result. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God (Psa. ix. 17). The beast and the false prophet had a long time of probation, and time for repentance. The first had 1260 years, and the second, much the same; but as systems, like wicked men, they allowed the day of grace to pass unimproved, and now there is no alternative—the lake of fire is their doom! What a warning to be wise in time—to redeem the time—and to "seek the Lord while he may be found." This doom is aggravated that they are cast "*alive* into the lake of fire." Burning after death is bad enough, but to be burnt to death is most appalling!

2. This doom is final. It is said at the beginning of the chapter (verse 3) that the punishment of Babylon, which is represented by the "great whore," continued, or "rose up for ever and ever." Here the beast and the false prophet shall share the same doom. This punishment is not only fearful—"burning with brimstone"—but final, "for ever and ever." No wonder that the command is given in Chap. xviii. 4, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive

not of her plagues." The question arises—How could the beast and the false prophet, not being persons but systems, be cast into the lake of fire? The language is figurative, and means their final and complete ruin. As whatever is cast into a lake of fire and brimstone must finally be consumed, so the ruin of these systems is represented as complete.

The doom of the remnant. They "were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse." The "remnant" means the followers of the beast and the false prophet. Their leaders, or representatives, were first taken and cast into the lake of fire, and then we have the doom of "the remnant," their followers. When a system is destroyed, as such, there may be some feeble frail ones left, but these soon become an easy prey. Jesus Christ, the great Captain of his people's salvation, having swept away the representatives of these false systems, now assails the feeble remnant with "the sword which proceeded out of his mouth," which means the sword of the Spirit, or the Word of God; and when they refuse to believe it, and accept it as teaching the way of salvation through faith in him alone, and become hopelessly impenitent as their predecessors, he sweeps them also with the besom of destruction till their carcasses fatten the ground and are a feast for the fowls of heaven; or, as the text says, "the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." The Gospel is the axe which is "laid to the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." This teaches us that the Gospel will have one of two effects—either to save or destroy—to be "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," or to be a witness to the destruction of the wicked. Let men be wise in time, believe in Jesus, and receive the Gospel, "the engrafted word, which is able to save their souls" (Jas. i. 21). This final doom of these false systems and their followers prepares the way for the Millennium, to which the attention of the reader is directed in the next chapter, when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the

waters cover the sea" (Habak. ii. 14). The temporal battles which have taken place may have prepared the way, in God's inscrutable providence, for the seed of the word which is to usher it in, and in which it is to bring forth such an abundant harvest.

The question may arise—Why are the systems, or the leaders, represented as cast into the "lake of fire," when the "remnant" are only "slain with the sword," and a feast for the fowls? As systems they can never spring up again, and now they are destroyed finally. As to the "remnant" of the systems it is only a temporary overthrow, they crop up again at the close of the Millennium. They were morally, or spiritually, "slain" by the sword of the Gospel, and left helpless during the long period of Christ's spiritual reign, but at the close of the Millennium they revive and come to the battle of Gog and Magog. Satan then beats up for volunteers, and he gets them, showing that these, though apparently dead, are ready again for action. After the battle they get their final doom with him (Chap. xx. 9, 10).

"And all the fowls were filled with their flesh." The view of Dr. Glasgow on the "fowls" seems to be the correct one, viz.—that the "fowls" mean "the secular philosophy of the time, which was to make its onslaught on the powers of the earth leagued against Immanuel. These allegorical birds, though themselves unholy, wage war against the superstitions of Antichrist." This philosophy, which was in various forms, is used in the plural under the designation "birds," and though in itself erroneous, had its part in supplanting these great systems. Rationalism, in its various forms, through its science, is exposing many of the superstitions of Rome and the theories of the False Prophet.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XIX.

1. What is meant by the word "Alleluia"?—It means, Praise ye Jehovah.

2. Why is the Romish system called "the great whore"?—In allusion to her fornications. (See explanation on Chap. xvii. 1.)

3. Who are meant by "the four and twenty elders and the four beasts"?—The "elders" represent the priests under the Old Testament, and the "beasts," the ministers of the Gospel. (See, for explanation, Notes on Chap. iv. 4-6.)

4. Whose "voice is this out of the throne"?—We think the voice of the angel whom he afterwards falls down to worship (verse 10), likely one of the redeemed encouraging them in their song.

5. Why does he call him "our God"?—Showing that he was one of the redeemed himself, likely John the Baptist.

6. Who are the Lamb and his wife?—Christ and his true invisible Church, purchased with his own blood.

7. Was not Christ married to his Church before, from the time he redeemed her? and why has the marriage to be repeated?—To let it be seen that while the visible Romish Church had fallen, as unworthy of his love, the old love to his true Church is confirmed, and will never be dissolved.

8. How did the wife make herself ready?—By putting on Christ's righteousness, which is represented by the "fine linen, clean and white."

9. What does the "fine linen" imply?—The costliness of the righteousness which clothes her, purchased at the cost of the bridegroom's life.

10. What is the idea of its being "clean and white"?—Its purity wrought out by Christ, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners."

11. How does the bride, or the Church, get it?—It is made over to her as a gift (Rom. v. 17).

12. Who commands John to "write"?—The same voice as that of the fifth verse, likely that of one of the redeemed, John the Baptist.

13. Why does he tell him to "write" it?—To remind John of the importance of the narrative.

14. What meaning is intended to be conveyed by "the marriage supper"?—The joy attending such nuptials.

15. How are we to interpret the word "called"?—The effectual call, to distinguish it from the general call. They accepted the call of the Gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit.

16. Who is this before whom John fell down to worship?—The same, we think, as he whose voice is heard in verse 5, and who commands John to write, in verse 9.

17. Who is he considered by some to be?—Some think the spirit of John the Baptist, as the "angel" of Chap. i. 1.

18. Why does he not permit John to worship him?—Because he is only a creature, a "fellow-servant," to worship whom would be idolatry.

19. What is meant by the testimony of Jesus?—The witness which the prophets and apostles bore to Jesus—that he was the Son of God, that he became incarnate, that he "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

20. How is the "testimony of Jesus the spirit of prophecy"?—The above "testimony," which is borne to Jesus, is the very essence of what the prophets and apostles taught (Isa. liii. 5; Rom. iv. 24, 25).

21. What is meant by the "white horse"?—The messenger of the Gospel, going quickly to conquer the world by its power.

22. Why is the horse called "white"?—To denote the purity of the Gospel message and the Gospel minister.

23. Why is the rider "called FAITHFUL and TRUE"?—To show that Christ, the Head of ministers, is Faithful and True to fulfil his promises in the Gospel.

24. What is the nature of this war?—It is a righteous war, in taking vengeance on them who will not submit to his Son in the Gospel, as their rightful sovereign.

25. Why "are his eyes as a flame of fire"?—To denote his grandeur, and to bring to the light what is concealed in darkness.

26. What is the meaning of the expression, "on his head were many crowns"?—Souls saved through his blood, as gems in his crown, and brought to believe through the Gospel.

27. What "name" is this which "no one knew but he himself"?—We think it means "Secret," or "Wonderful" (Judg. xiii. 18; Isa. ix. 6), and points to the name "Immanuel," the incarnate God.

28. What is the meaning of his being "clothed with a vesture dipped in blood"?—The allusion would seem to refer to Isa. lxiii. 1-3, where, as a sacrifice for his people, he gained the victory over his and their enemies by blood; and in treading the winepress of his Father's wrath for them his garments are represented as stained, or "dipped in blood."

29. Why is "his name called the Word of God"?—Because it is through this name that God reveals himself as reconciled to sinners who have offended him.

30. What is meant by "the armies in heaven following him upon white horses"?—The ministers of the Gospel, or of the heavenly kingdom on earth, following Jesus Christ, the Head Preacher, with swiftness and purity.

31. What does the "fine linen, white and clean," represent?—The righteousness of Christ, with which they should be clothed, and the purity which should characterize their lives, as having clean hands and a pure heart.

32. What is the meaning of the "sharp sword" which "goeth out of his mouth"?—This is the Gospel, which is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword," &c. (Heb. iv. 12).

33. How does it "smite the nations"?—By "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. x. 5).

34. Whom does he "rule with a rod of iron"?—His enemies.

35. How does he do so?—By letting them feel the weight of his wrath (Psa. ii. 9).

36. How does he "tread the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God"?—As the Jews trod out the grapes in the winepress (Isa. lxiii. 2, 3), so the Lord Jesus Christ, as judge of the earth, shall tread, or deal out, the Father's wrath to all the rebellious who refuse to yield to his sceptre and believe his Gospel.

37. Why has he the "name" on his "vesture and on his thigh"?—In allusion to the custom of conquerors having their names inscribed on their garments, and on the sword which hung on their thigh, or the part of the garment which covered the thigh.

38. Who is this "angel standing in the sun"?—We think, probably, Christ himself, appearing in the sun, to represent his brightness, and alluding to his appearance at his transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 2).

39. Why likely Christ?—That as he had been described by John as a conqueror, he would make his appearance on the scene, to give directions as to the spoils of the battle over his enemies.

40. What is meant by "the fowls of heaven"?—(1) The common fowls that gather after a battle to prey on the carnage. (2) Allegorical birds, or a secular philosophy, exposing the superstition and hollowness of Romanism and Mahometanism.

41. When did this battle commence in earnest?—It was always waged since God set up a Church on earth; but it began in right earnest with the Gospel dispensation.

42. What is meant by "the supper of the great God"?—The spoils of the battle over his enemies.

43. Who are meant by the "kings, and captains, and mighty men, and horses," &c.?—The worldly power against Christ and his army, in the battle between truth and error.

44. Who are meant by "the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies"?—The Papal system, and all the powers it can muster.

45. Who is meant by "the false prophet"?—Mahometanism.

46. How does "the false prophet" work miracles before the beast?—He pretended to have received a message from the angel Gabriel; and in some of its forms, as Mormonism and spiritualism, it pretends to work miracles, and has "deceived" the beast.

47. What is meant by "the mark of the beast and his image"?—(See Answers on Chap. xiv. 9.)

48. How could the beast and the false prophet, not being persons but systems, be cast "into the lake of fire"?—The language is figurative, and means their complete and final ruin.

49. When is the battle between truth and error to end?—When these two systems shall have been taken out of the way and the "remnant slain."

50. Who are meant by the "remnant slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse"?—The followers of the beast and the false prophet, that still remained a feeble remnant when the great systems were swept away.

51. What is meant by the "sword which proceeded out of his mouth"?—"The sword of the Spirit, which is called the Word of God" (Ephes. vi. 17).

52. Why are "the beast and the false prophet," or the systems they represent, "cast into the lake of fire," while the "remnant" are only "slain with the sword"?—Because the systems can never spring into life again, as being finally destroyed; whereas the slaying with the sword is only typical of a temporary overthrow, as the "remnant" shall spring up again at the close of the Millennium.

53. What then does the slaying mean?—A moral or spiritual slaying by the sword of the Gospel.

54. What is meant by "the fowls being filled with their flesh"?—"The fowls," we think, mean the secular philosophy, in various forms, that prey upon these false systems, and conduce, under the Gospel, to their overthrow.

CHAPTER XX.

THE great subject of this chapter is, we think, the Millennium, and the binding of Satan during its continuance; the battle of Gog and Magog, at the close of it; and the final judgment of all things, when Christ comes the second time without sin unto salvation.

VERSES 1-3.—*And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit . . . and after that he must be loosed a little season.*

These verses set forth—

I.—The binding of Satan during the Millennium.

He is bound, or restrained, by the angel. The angel is evidently the Lord Jesus Christ, who has “the keys of hell and of death” (Chap. i. 18); who “openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth” (Chap. iii. 7). Satan is to be particularly restrained for three periods. (1) He was at the ushering in of the Gospel, from Christ’s resurrection till the overthrow of the Jewish nation by the Romans, about A.D. 70. (2) At the close of the ten Pagan persecutions, about A.D. 312, in the time of Constantine the Great. (3) Will be during the Millennium. It is noteworthy that each restraint is accompanied by the effective preaching of the Gospel, as at Pentecost, and when the apostles went everywhere preaching the Gospel. In the time of Constantine, and considerably after this time, the heralds of the cross were indefatigable in scattering the seed of the Word. They had got liberty now from their Pagan enemies, and they used it to disseminate the truth. And in the Millennium, in Satan’s third restraint, the Gospel will be preached on a grander scale than has ever yet been seen, when through its instrumentality “the earth shall be filled with the

knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

The "chain" that binds Satan is called "great," for it has a great and strong enemy to bind. He goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. But this chain curbs him; and though it is said he has a long chain, yet he is *chained*. He has no further power than what is given him, as we see in the case of his onslaught on Job, but he is ready to make the most of his liberty. Now, at the Millennium, he is bound securely for the period in which "he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled."

"And he laid hold on the dragon . . . and bound him a thousand years." This shows the power of this angel, who is Christ, and the facility with which he seizes the arch-enemy. There seems to be a struggle now, however, for the mastery on the part of Satan, for he knows well with whom he has to deal. Christ grasps him with the might of a giant, and binds him with his "great chain," that his saints might get a little rest. He is called "the dragon," who is represented as being cast out of heaven "into the earth, and his angels with him" (Chap. xii. 9). He is the persecutor of the woman with the man-child. Now he is to be taken from the earth for a time and bound in the bottomless pit. He was the prime mover, as the dragon, in the old Pagan Roman Empire. He was the secret designer, as the serpent, of all the schemes of evil which infested the world in every form of false doctrine and heresy, in infusing his poison and subtle cunning into the hearts of men and systems. He is called "the Devil," or the evil one, as the father of lies from the beginning; and he is called "Satan," or the adversary, as opposed to everything that is good in God's universe.

It is noticeable that while Satan's angels were cast with him out of heaven (Chap. xii. 9), they were not cast in here with him into the bottomless pit, or bound with this chain. Why is this? As grace is the rule during the Millennium, and sin the exception, still there is more or less sin in it, as Satan gets volunteers at its close for the battle of Gog and Magog. May not these angels of his be allowed, or permitted, to go through the world during its

continuance, to keep up more or less the form of evil, and prepare the recruits for the muster of the battle at its close? True, when their master is shut up, and they have no guiding head, they cannot do the same amount of mischief; but as they were always intent on it, as when they were cast out of the maniacs they rushed into the swine (Matt. viii. 28-32), is it not likely that they will try to do all the evil they can during this period of grace, and to have an army ready for the arch-enemy when he gets loose and wages the battle? Not only is he shut up, but there is a seal set on him, to secure that he himself will do no injury during this period. Seals are used to denote security, as on letters and on merchants' goods; so here, Christ has his seal on Satan, to show that he is in his power, and that he can dispose of him as he pleases.

II.—The time when the Millennium is to come in.

Now if you take Daniel vii. 25, as to the "time, and times, and the dividing of time," and Rev. xiii. 5, as to the "forty and two months," you have a key to the time it is to commence. A "time" is a year; "times," two years; and "the dividing of time," half a year=three years and a half, or "forty and two months." Now the great Antichrist is considered by most commentators to exist about 1260 years, equal to "a time, and times, and the dividing of time," or "half-a-time," a prophetic day for a year; and if you date from the time the Pope became a little horn, or assumed the temporal power (A.D. 755), it brings you to A.D. 2015, when we may expect his spiritual power to come to an end and the ushering in of the Millennium.

And I think we have reason for believing that there will be some great change at the end of the present 2,000 years. At the end of every two thousand since the beginning of the world we have had some remarkable epoch, and so, at the end of the present, may we not expect the same? At the end of the first 2,000 years we had the call of Abraham; at the end of the second 2,000, the coming of Christ; and, at the end of the third 2,000, may we not expect the fall of the great Antichrist and the ushering in of the Millennium? Indeed, at the end of every 1,000 years, we have had some remarkable event.

At the end of the first 1,000, the translation of Enoch ; at the end of the second 1,000, the call of Abraham ; at the end of the third 1,000, the building of Solomon's temple ; at the end of the fourth 1,000, the coming of Christ ; at the end of the fifth 1,000, the separation of the Western, or Romish Church, from the Greek, or Eastern Church ; and at the end of the sixth 1,000, may we not expect the Millennium ?

We may premise that the fall of the great Antichrist will take place first, for Paul says (2 Thes. ii. 3) that "that day shall not come, except there be a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;" (verses 7, 8) "Only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way: and then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." It developed itself by degrees, and as it rose by degrees, we may expect it will fall by degrees—first the temporal power, then the spiritual power. The Gospel must be first preached among all nations, and then shall the end come. The removal of Antichrist, in the form of Romanism and Mahometanism—for as the two rose together they will fall together—will, no doubt, prepare the way for the Millennium. And when the Gospel is preached in all nations, and these barriers taken out of the way, then may we expect the fulfilment of the prophecy, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." And we think we see the dawn of such a day approaching. As the dawn ushers in the day, and coming events cast their shadows before them, so the overthrow of the Pope's temporal power is the sign of the overthrow of his spiritual power. Look at the openings for the Gospel in India and China, in Spain and Turkey, in Madagascar, in the South Sea Islands, and say—Is not this the dawn of a better day ? But look at the openings for the Bible in Rome itself, the capital of the Popes, where for centuries it was a proscribed book, and where now it is sold publicly on the streets, while a few years ago, if not death, it would have been imprisonment, to do so, and say—Is not this the dawn of a better day ? It is reported that a man who had been imprisoned

for Bible-teaching was among the first to rush into Rome with Victor Emmanuel's soldiers when the gates were opened, holding up the Bible as a trophy of the victory, and indicative of that liberty of its future success. Think of ten Christian denominations preaching the Gospel in the city of Rome, under the very shadow of the Vatican, and say—Is not this the dawn of a better day?

Think of Spain, the land of the Inquisition, where thousands of God's saints were slaughtered for the truth, now having in its capital, and through many of its leading towns, Protestant Churches, where salvation is proclaimed through faith in the blood of Christ, as the only meritorious cause of the sinner's salvation, and then say—Is not this the harbinger of the coming Millennium? To have told Rome a few years ago that the proscribed book would be publicly sold in her capital—that Protestant missionaries would be preaching the Gospel there—that the heretics would be preaching in Spain, without let or hindrance—in Spain, the land of the Inquisition,—would have been to insult her, and the most dreamy enthusiast could hardly venture to believe you. Truly we may say—What hath God wrought? Are not such signs foreshadowing the Millennial dawn?

The progress of Missions is also another feature of the coming Millennium. It was at Ketering, in Nottingham, in A.D. 1792, where the first collection was made for modern missions, and the proceeds of that collection realized £13 2s. 6d. Some one said, on that occasion, that there was a mine to be explored in India, but who is to go down and explore it? Said Carey, "I'll go down, if you hold the rope?" meaning the rope of prayer. He did go down, and translated the whole Bible into some six of the languages of India; the New Testament in twenty-three of its languages; and parts of the Bible into forty of its languages. He was honoured by the British government as their interpreter; and though, on the voyage out, he was sneered at by the young officers on board, as the "consecrated cobbler," when the names of these men shall have long since passed into oblivion, the name of Carey shall live in history to all coming generations. Now there are some 2,000 Protestant missionaries in that land, and

300,000 native converts. The Religious Tract Society was instituted in A.D. 1799, and tracts and religious books have been scattered by millions over various lands since that time. The British and Foreign Bible Society was instituted in A.D. 1804, and now Bibles to the number of four millions a year are being sown broadcast throughout the length and breadth of the earth. There have been circulated by it, from its commencement, over 100,000,000 of copies, and in 160 different languages. Surely all these things taken together indicate the overthrow of Antichrist at the close of A.D. 2000, and the coming of the Millennium, when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

III.—The time it is to continue.

If the 1,000 years are common years, as some take them to be, objection (1) Mahometanism and Romanism, and Hindooism, and some other false systems would have a longer reign than Christianity in the Millennium. Is it to be expected that Antichrist will extend over 1,260 years, and Christ's reign only over 1,000? Then on this theory the number of the lost must be greater than that of the saved. But we believe Christ will never allow Satan to point the finger of scorn at him, and say, "What a puny army you lead, while mine is so numerous." We could not with any degree of satisfaction subscribe to such a theory.

If it extend over 360,000 or 365,000 years,—the year-day theory,—then objection (2) How could the earth contain the number of the inhabitants? It is argued that the population doubles every 50 years, hence it would be four times as large every 100 years, sixteen times as large every 200 years, and more than a million times in a 1,000 years. Suppose the population to be ten hundred millions at the beginning of the Millennium, and increase at this ratio for only 1,000 years, there would be at the end of that time ten hundred thousand millions on the earth. Suppose now, on this theory, the habitable land to be sixty-five millions of square miles, which is about the area, there would be about 4,057 persons for every square perch, whom it would be impossible for it to contain. But

the population does not increase at this rate. Sometimes it may, but this is an exceptional case. Ireland is less now than it was thirty years ago as to its population ; and a similar decrease may, in all probability, be taking place in other countries.

In the year A.D. 1, the population of the earth was about a hundred millions; now at the close of nearly 2,000 years it is little more than a thousand millions, whereas, if it had increased at the rate set down above, the earth at the present time could not give the people standing room, if there was no sea at all. The population is largely kept in check by wars, and famines, and pestilence, and shipwrecks, and the thousand other things to which humanity is subject. Let the population increase at the same rate as it has done for the last 2,000 years, namely, ten times, and the earth is capable of affording room for its inhabitants over a long period of ages. Why North America itself could afford ample accommodation for three billions six hundred millions, or 241 to the square mile; while the whole globe, peopled in the same proportion, could accommodate $15\frac{1}{2}$ times as many people as are on it at present.

Objection (3) A third objection is raised. Even if the earth could contain this number, there would not be resources enough in it to supply all their wants over this lengthened period of 360,000 or 365,000 years. Great changes, no doubt, will take place during the Millennium. It is said, "then shall the earth yield her increase. Lebanon will be a fruitful field. The wilderness shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." Under the blessings of peace "men shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks;" commerce shall be extended, and agriculture so improved, and the resources of the soil so developed, that there shall be food enough for man and beast. Every one knows that the resources of the soil, when properly cultivated, are almost inexhaustible.

But even should there be no want of food, would the mines and minerals of the earth be sufficient for the other wants of man over that extended period? The ground, says the objector, could always be cultivated anew, but

coal and iron, and other necessities, cannot be reproduced when they are exhausted. In Ireland there are turf and coal enough to tide it over many generations; and even if these should be exhausted it is more than probable science will have discovered, before that, some means of utilising the mountain limestone for fuel. It is quite possible that within the range of chemistry there is such a substance as would enable us to make them burn in our grates and light up our rooms and parlours, as the blazing coal, which is such a luxury. A man said, a short time ago, that there was coal enough in England to supply it for a 1,000 years. The same, I presume, may be said of Scotland, as the coal fields of Great Britain and Ireland extend over an area, when put together, of 12,000 square miles. There are large coal fields in France, in India, in Japan, and Canada. British America has them to the extent of 18,000 square miles; the United States of North America has them to the extent of 196,000 square miles; while China throws them all into the shade, containing coal-fields to the extent of 500,000 square miles. The woods of America, independent of the coal at all, would supply fuel for domestic use for generations to come. And even if the peat, and the limestone, and the coal, and the wood were all exhausted, the petroleum in the bowels of the earth would give light and heat for an untold period. As rock oil, it is now found in abundance. Why, the petroleum wells of Pennsylvania are yielding at present 30,000 barrels per day, and this is only a sample of what is available if required.

Again, the iron mountains of Missouri are capable of supplying one million tons annually for 200 years. Pilot Knob, rising above the Mississippi, contains fourteen millions of tons; and Iron Mountain is computed to contain the enormous quantity of two hundred and thirty millions of tons. Who would not say, from these considerations, that there are enough resources for the Millennium, even if it extended over the most lengthened period. Two things we may presume on. First, that Deity will not likely burn up the earth while there are such large resources in it. And, secondly, that no matter how long the Millennium will continue, even 360,000 or

365,000 years, he will never send more people on the earth than he will make provision for; in a word, that he will never send a mouth but he will send something to fill it, for "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof."

The "little season" refers likely to the period elapsing from the close of the Millennium, through the battle of Gog and Magog, to the final consummation of all things.

IV.—The nature of the Millennium.

VERSE 4.—*And I saw thrones . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*

In entering on the nature of the Millennium, there are three or four questions which need some elucidation. (1) What are the thrones? We consider that they are the thrones of State government and Church government. As we stated already in the Millennium, grace being the rule and sin the exception, not only the ministry, but the magistracy, will be converted, and from their respective "thrones," or places of judgment, will dispense just judgment. The "thrones" then are the seats of judgment of these officers. And as righteousness exalteth a nation (which will be literally the case now) just judgment will be its prevailing feature. (2) Who "sat on them"? The question has been answered in anticipation. But how do we find out that it is ministers and magistrates who sat on them? It is said in the text, "they sat on them." We take the nearest antecedent, and find that the word "they" refers to the "nations," in the preceding verse. Now we learn in that verse that Satan deceives the nations no more during the thousand years, and consequently restrained from his temptation by the "angel" who shut him up, the "nations are now a holy people, and fit, in their representatives, to take their places as judges and magistrates in Church and State,—to distribute just judgment in keeping with the character of this holy time. Where is the need, if all are holy, for judgment at all? Even if Satan be restrained from his temptations, and the nations, as such, are holy,—grace being the rule and sin the exception,—still there is more or less sin

as we showed already, and there are still more or less people to be restrained. Then it is only the "nations," in their representatives, that will be the judges and magistrates in Church and State. The "nations," of course, mean the Gentiles, who are now brought in as the "heathen given to Christ for his inheritance," and now they are as fit to take their place, judging their own kindred, as the twelve apostles judging the twelve tribes of Israel. It may not mean that all the converted Gentiles are raised to the throne of judges or magistrates in Church and State; but as now, those that are best qualified are raised to such offices, and have just judgment committed to their hands, so then, those best qualified by their gifts and graces will occupy those thrones and judge the community. And though all the "nations," or Gentiles, cannot be magistrates and ministers, all can judge the world by their holy lives. In a word, "they" (the revived "nations") shall, by their walk and conversation, rebuke the ungodliness that exists, even then in the Millennium. We learn from this that things in the Millennium are not so far different from what obtains now, as some imagine, but that it is a state of justice and holiness on a far higher and grander scale, with the same form of order, but much more orderly than at present.

(3) What "judgment was given unto them"? Christ, the King and Head of the Church, here delegates the authority of judging into their hands, he still superintending all their movements, for "his kingdom ruleth over all." As when he ascended on high, "He gave some, apostles, and some, prophets, and some, evangelists," &c. (Eph. iv. 11); and the ministerial and magisterial offices are of his appointment (Rom. xiii. 4); so here, he commits to these officials the ordinary judgment of his kingdom in Church and State, always holding the helm himself, to steer the ship of State and Church safely over every breaker. "And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." "And" couples the revived "nations" of verse 3 and "souls," both of whom "lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." How did these revived "nations" live and reign with Christ for this period? The revived "nations" having their representatives on the

bench, or "thrones," to punish the ungodly, and their representatives in the Church to preach to the ungodly, "lived and reigned with Christ" in spirit on the earth—as there is no place mentioned—during the term of their natural lives, and after death completed the period in reigning with him on his throne in heaven, rejoicing in the special progress of the truth during this time as it is revealed to them. "And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." The word "they," has for its antecedent "souls," as well as revived "nations," who "lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." (4) Who are the souls? They are the same as those under the altar (Chap. vi. 9), who suffered for the truth during the ten Pagan persecutions, and also those who suffered during the whole period of Antichrist. (See, for explanation of this, and of the "beast, and image, and mark," &c., Chap. xiii. 14-17.)

But how did the souls "live and reign with Christ a thousand years"? Up till the time of the rise of the great Antichrist they were complaining, or crying for vengeance on Pagan Rome, which put them to death. (See explanation of the passage, Chap. vi. 3.) Now, when "the little season"—while Antichrist was to continue, which put "their brethren" to death—was "fulfilled," and that system was overthrown, they are no longer in the attitude of complaining; they are now reigning, and they "reign with Christ a thousand years," as assessors with him, approving of the conduct of the magistrates and ministers, and disapproving of the conduct of the sinning remnant, and rejoicing in the special progress of the truth, for which they suffered, as it is revealed to them during this period.

As to the nature of the resurrections mentioned here: there are two spoken of in this chapter—one at the beginning of the Millennium, and the other at the end of it—one a resurrection of souls to holiness, at the beginning of it, the other, a resurrection of souls to sin, at the close of it.

VERSES 5, 6.—*But the rest of the dead lived not again . . . and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

“The rest of the dead” means the residuum, or remnant, of the nations that were not converted, or raised, to spiritual life at the beginning of the Millennium, or through it—for there is always a remnant of sin in it—and who are Satan’s volunteers at the close of it. They are now quickened to evil, and follow their leader to the battle of Gog and Magog. “This is the first resurrection.” Some of the best commentators assert that this clause is an interpolation, as it is not found in the *Codex Sinaiticus*, the oldest Greek manuscript, nor in the Syriac version, nor in some others of the Greek manuscripts; besides, it apparently breaks the sense of the current narrative. “The rest of the dead” cannot mean “the first resurrection,” as they did not rise till the close of the Millennium. Granting that the clause is genuine, and that it is a commentary on the sense, then “the first resurrection” cannot refer to “the rest of the dead,” but to the revived, or quickened, “nations” of verse 3.

I.—The first resurrection is a resurrection then of the revived “nations,” or a resurrection of souls to holiness, at the beginning of the Millennium, in opposition to a revival of souls to sin at the close of it. You may see by examining the chapter that it is a resurrection of souls that is spoken of, for there is not a single word in the whole of it about the resurrection of bodies. Thus the passage quoted by many from 1 Thes. iv 16, “The dead in Christ shall rise first,” has no bearing on the meaning here. The meaning there is, that the righteous dead, or “the dead in Christ,” shall rise before the then living are changed, to show that the latter will have no advantage over the former; but the subject under consideration in the text refers exclusively and entirely to the resurrection of souls.

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power.” The meaning seems to be, “Blessed is he” who is one of the revived nations, or who has been the subject of regeneration at the beginning of the Millennium, on such

"the second death"—eternal death—"hath no power." We have here the security of the saints. They are free from the penalty of sin in the torments of hell, by the death of Christ in their room and stead; they have the evidence of the first resurrection by their new spiritual life, and nothing shall separate them from him, or bring them again under the power of "the second death" (Rom. viii. 38, 39). Some confound what is said here of the resurrection of souls with what Paul says of the resurrection of bodies—"The dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thes. iv. 16)—contrary to all sound interpretation, and only confuse what is otherwise clear. Paul is speaking of the final judgment, and says, "The dead in Christ shall rise first," that is, before the living who are then on the earth shall be changed. The dead in their graves shall rise before the living are changed, that the latter may have no advantage over them. John here is speaking, on the other hand, of souls raised from a death of sin to a life of righteousness—for every real conversion is such—and as now, at the beginning of the Millennium, there would be a great revival of religion—a quickening of dead souls—yea, a Pentecost on a grander scale than ever the world witnessed—he calls it a resurrection; and those who are the subjects of this, shall never be the subjects of "the second death," on such "the second death hath no power." To prove that this is John's meaning, and that the resurrection spoken of is a spiritual resurrection, let it be noticed that the setting up of Christ's kingdom has been divided into four periods. First, the Pentecostal period; second, the Constantine period, when he overthrew the Heathen Roman Empire and established Christianity; third, the time when Christ comes for the destruction of Antichrist, as we think, at the beginning of the Millennium; fourth, when he comes to the last judgment,—for this is a setting up of his kingdom which shall never be cast down. Now as Christ's last coming is accompanied with a resurrection of bodies, so each of the foregoing is accompanied with a resurrection of souls, as a type of it. The first was attended with a resurrection of souls at Pentecost, and after the persecution of Stephen, when the disciples "went everywhere preaching

the Word." The second, likewise, when the Christians got liberty, in the time of Constantine, from the ten Pagan persecutions. And, on the principle of analogy, may we not expect that at Christ's coming for the destruction of Antichrist there will be a great spiritual revival also? a revival of the principles for which the martyrs suffered—true religion. "They shall be priests of God and of Christ." That is, they shall be a holy people, dedicated to God through the merits of Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; and "priests of Christ," as presenting their "bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is their reasonable service" (Rom. xii. 1). "And shall reign with him a thousand years." That is, the revived "nations," in their representatives on the bench, or "thrones," to punish the ungodly, and their representatives in the pulpit, to preach to the ungodly, shall "live and reign with Christ," in spirit, on the earth,—as there is no place mentioned,—during the term of their natural life, and after death complete the period of the thousand years, in reigning with him on his throne in heaven as kings and priests. Why is it confined to "a thousand years"? Will they not always reign with him? Yes; but this period is confined to the special progress of the truth.

We think Christ's reign in the Millennium is to be spiritual, not personal. Millenarians say, personal, and that he is to come at the beginning of it to reign personally on the earth. There are many good people who hold this theory, and we rejoice to know that it does not involve such a material difference between saints, as that it would subvert any of the other sound theories of the Gospel plan of salvation, on which they are agreed: nevertheless, we think that the personal reign of Christ is not taught here, but that he reigns in and through the Millennium by the power of his Spirit, and that this is sufficient to accomplish all the ends for which the Millennium is designed. Is not the Spirit omnipotent in power? Did he not accomplish at Pentecost, and since, great revivals and reformatations in the world? Is he not as powerful as ever to make "the Word quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of

soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and "to be "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"? Why insist on the necessity of Christ's personal presence for the salvation of the world at, or through, the Millennium?

We argue for his spiritual reign on two grounds. (1) He is to come, according to 1 Thes. iii. 13, "with all his saints." Now there is no question but this must be at the final judgment, when the number of his saints is complete, for if it were at the beginning of it, he could not come with all his saints, except there were none becoming so in it, which is contrary to its very nature. Again, "Every eye shall see him," according to Chap. i. 7; but if the righteous are only raised, as Millenarians say, at the beginning of it, how could "every eye see him"?

(2) Christ says (John xvi. 7), "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." The Holy Spirit comes as the result of Christ's intercession. Now if Jesus Christ left the right hand of his Father, what ground had we to expect the Spirit to convince us of "sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment"? Are we to ignore the power of the Spirit, as if he could not convert the world without Christ's presence? Have we not evidence of his power on the day of Pentecost, and in many other instances since, of what he could do, and will, when he shall be poured out on all flesh? (Acts ii. 17, 18). We believe in the Holy Ghost, and in his omnipotent power, and that he will subdue the hearts of men, moulding them and fashioning them and forming them after Christ's likeness, and that he is able to bring "into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." We infer that Christ's bodily presence is not necessary to the conversion of the world, indeed he said so himself, "It is expedient for you that I go away," but that the Spirit will make men a willing people in the day of his power, and that God will be glorified in sending the Spirit, as the result of Christ's intercession, to convert the world unto King Jesus.

II.—The second resurrection is a resurrection of souls to sin, at the close of the Millennium. "The rest of the

dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." As we have seen, "the rest of the dead" means the persons who were not converted at the beginning, or during the Millennium, and who are now Satan's volunteers at the close of it, as we have it set forth in the next few verses.

VERSES 7, 8.—*And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations . . . Gog and Magog . . . the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.*

I —The close of the Millennium.

Two questions here arise—1. Why is Satan let loose? To try the people, as he did Job, to see what is in them. To try saints, whether the root of the matter is in them, and that in their very trial they may cling closer to God through Christ. To try *sinners*, that it may be seen how false the professions of many of them were. Many had professed a feigned subjection to King Jesus and zeal for the Gospel—for we have seen already that there was more or less sin in the Millennium—but when they are put to the test by this temptation of Satan, it will be seen that the root of the matter was not in them, that they succumb to him at the first onslaught. In the case of the saints, like the oak in the forest, they are grounded more firmly in the faith by the blast of temptation. In the case of sinners, they are shaken like a reed before the wind, and have no power to withstand the shock. We have here a very important lesson—that when men are involved in carnal security they sometimes get a sudden upheaving to shake them in their quietude. By some internal convulsion the mountain limestone, which is so indispensable to the building of our houses, has been upheaved to its present position from the bottom of the sea, when all, perhaps, may have appeared to be quiet around; so often, when people are not expecting it, some sudden trial bursts upon them, to make the righteous take a firmer hold of Jesus, and raise them to a higher platform than before, while the wicked are bent as a reed before the wind, and sunk deeper and deeper in the mire of sin than before.

2. How long is he to be let loose? "A little season" (verse 3). Just as long, in all probability, as will test the faith of the saints, and expose the unfaithfulness of the sinners who were acting hypocritically. He has a mission yet to accomplish before he is finally shut up, and that is to beat up for volunteers to come to the battle of Gog and Magog.

II.—The battle of Gog and Magog.

It is called so after the name of that fought against Israel (Ezek. xxxix. 11), as it is a battle of error against the spiritual Israel and the truth they hold.

1. The nature of the battle. It is a battle of truth against error. Satan tries hard to undo the work of the Millennium, as he is always intent on doing evil. He beats up for volunteers, and he gets them. He musters his forces. He goes out to "deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." But though it is a battle of truth against error, the spiritual element does not preclude the temporal; there may be a temporal battle besides. Just as temporal wars, in many instances, have prepared the way for the Gospel, in ushering in the Millennium; so the temporal battle of Gog and Magog may prepare the way for ushering in the time of the end. Witness how the Crimean war prepared the way for the Gospel in Turkey. Before that, it was death for a Mahometan to be a Christian; but since the signing of the *Hati Cherif* by the Mahometan power, at the close of it, any man can become a Christian, with the enjoyment of his goods and his life. Witness how the late American war prepared the way for the Gospel, not only among the slaves in the South, but in Africa itself. It has given liberty to these sable sons of toil to become missionaries in that their original native land, and many of them are now in training for their work in the Fisk University; and the jubilee singers, who have been making a tour in this country, have been raising funds for this very purpose. These Africans are the only suitable persons for the mission work, for Europeans are not able to bear the heat of the climate. And what a

grand thought that God has overruled the war for good ! and that many of the coloured population are now preparing to go and preach Christ and him crucified, as the only hope of the lost and ruined sinner, to “ their kinsmen according to the flesh.” Witness how the war in Austria, by the battle of Sadowa, in 1866, a few years ago, was overruled for the furtherance of the Gospel, when it led to the breaking of the *Concordat* with Rome, which bound all parents, where one of them was a Roman Catholic, to bring up their children in that faith. The Concordat is now gone, and parents may bring up their children as they wish. And has not the late war between France and Germany opened up the way for the Gospel in Rome, in a way that a few years ago seemed most incomprehensible ? Was it not through it that the way, as we have seen already, was opened up for the Gospel in Rome ? so that now several evangelical denominations are preaching the Gospel in that city. Well may we say, “ What hath God wrought ? ” War ploughs up the ground and prepares it for the Gospel, as the ploughshare the soil for the reception of the seed. Though this may be severe in itself, we cannot quarrel with the dispensations of Providence, when this is often the order of it. And so on the same principle there may be some great temporal battle, called that of Gog and Magog, because those engaging in it are from the same original stock of Gog and Magog, ushering in the Millennium, and preparing the way to give greater scope for the truth to contend against error. And when the two shall have measured swords, truth shall triumph ; and, retiring from the field, with the laurels of victory wreathed around her brow, she shall shout over her vanquished enemy, “ Victory, victory, through the blood of the Lamb.” You are ready to ask—What error was to be rooted out, or what false systems to be overthrown ? The remnants of Antichrist, Romanism, Mahometanism, Hindooism, and it may be other false systems. A remnant of these, perhaps, may have been sleeping in the breasts of wicked men during the period of the Millennium, and now it is roused by Satan making his last sally, and gathering them to the battle. But the truth, or the Gospel, is more than a match for all these combined. It sweeps them as with the

besom of destruction, scatters them as the chaff before the whirlwind, and prepares the way for the end, when Christ shall appear in the clouds of heaven, with all his saints, to take "vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

2. The extent of the battle. It is said, "Satan shall go out to deceive the nations that are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog." We have here where the spiritual battle will be fought—"on the four quarters of the earth;" but where the temporal battle is to be fought, it is still uncertain. We have Gog and Magog introduced in Ezekiel, Chaps. xxxviii., xxxix., which came up to destroy Israel. but were overthrown. So their representatives will gather together in battle against the spiritual Israel at the close of the Millennium, and will be overthrown as their predecessors. Gog, seems originally to mean Gurg, or Georgia, and includes the western parts of Asia and Europe, viz.: the Japhatic nations generally. Magog, again, according to Dr. Glasgow, was a son of Japhet, who gave name to the Mongols, and may be represented in the Magi, or Magicians of Persia and Media. Thus, the name may symbolize Eastern Asia (including India, China, Japan, and the Islands). The names of Gog and Magog in Ezekiel, would seem to indicate that Asiatic and European nations would be involved in the war which he predicted against Israel. And as the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel were heathen nations, so something like to a revival of old heathen superstition may be the great apostacy of the last time, and against which the arrows of Truth will be directed. The apostacy may not be precisely a resurrection of Antichrist, yet it may be much of the same character. Satan now tries to revive the remnant of the old superstitions—Romanism, Mahometanism, Hindooism—sleeping apparently so long in the breasts of his followers, in these systems, and he masses all their strength against the truth, but the attempt only proves that the "Gospel is still the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." It is still "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations, and everything that exalteth itself

against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. x. 4, 5). And here is a large field for its mission, and for carrying on the war. Wherever a sinner is to be found throughout the wide range of the countries we have mentioned, yea, throughout the whole world (for we are told in the next verse that the battle hosts "went up on the breadth of the earth")—there the truth is to confront them; yea, wherever a "bone" lies unburied, as we have it in Ezekiel's prophecy, or a remnant of the false systems we have enumerated, is to be found, there the Gospel is to be preached, for its object is to remove every trace of false doctrine, and bury every bone in the valley of Hamon-Gog—that is, the valley of the multitude. The hosts the Gospel has to confront are numerous "as the sand of the sea"; notwithstanding, it is more than a match for all its adversaries, for it "is the power of God unto salvation."

VERSES 9, 10.—*And they went up on the breadth of the earth and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

The extent of the battle continued. "They went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the holy city."

1. The daring of Satan and his allies. Notwithstanding this, and notwithstanding that Satan aimed at undoing, if possible, in this battle of Gog and Magog, the whole work of the Millennium, Christ's saints are safe. Satan and his myrmidons cannot take a feather out of their wing. Though they "compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city," they were invulnerable, being "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" (1 Pet. 1-5). "The camp of the saints, and the beloved city," had their type in the Jewish theocracy tabernacling in the wilderness; and as the cloudy pillar by day, and the pillar of fire by night, with the angel of the covenant in the midst, protected the Jews then from the heat and the cold and all their enemies, so now the same Almighty arm is a shield for the saints against all the assembled forces of Satan and his armies, in this last final conflict. "The eternal God is their refuge, and underneath are the

everlasting arms." They are safe under the shadow of his wings. He that is with them is greater than he that is against them, and hence they may sing, "The Lord of Hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our refuge" (Ps. xlv. 7). "The camp of the saints," now, "and the beloved city," are scattered throughout the earth, wherever the children of God, or the holy theocracy are, and their overthrow by Satan and his allies is vain. He who is with them is greater than he that is against them. "The beloved city," means the Jerusalem of the saints, where they are banded together—though scattered throughout the world—as inhabitants in a city against the common enemy. As Jerusalem was called "the beloved city," meaning the city of David (the word, David, meaning beloved), so the city of the saints, wherever they are scattered, means that they are beloved of God, and will be preserved by him as "they are accepted in their beloved" Christ Jesus.

2. Their overthrow. "Fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." This does not appear to be literal fire, but the wrath of God on these nations opposing the saints, as the vials on the Romish system, for the same cause. The truth triumphs in the overthrow of the enemies of the saints. Gog and Magog are now vanquished enemies; they have to quit the field in disgrace. Error measured swords with the truth, but it was woefully at discount. As Wickliffe said, before the Reformation, when he was confronted for his doctrines before a large circle of bishops, doctors, and priests, "The truth shall prevail." God often makes the wrath of man to praise him; but to the remainder of that wrath he sets restraining bounds. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone . . . and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." When Satan has tried all his strength, and has risen to the height of his power, God arrests him in his career of wickedness. He says to him, as to the waves of the sea, "Hitherto shalt thou come; but no further." He grasps him with the might of his omnipotence, and casts him "into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are" to

"be tormented day and night for ever and ever." This is his final doom. He has measured swords with the King of kings since "there was war in heaven, when Michael and his angels fought, and the dragon and his angels fought, and they were cast out into the earth, neither was their place found any more in heaven." Now the victory is complete; he shall deceive the nations no more, but shall suffer for his rebellion the fire that shall never be quenched.

"The lake of fire" is his final and eternal doom. "The bottomless pit" (verse 3) was only a temporary doom for 1,000 years. Here he is to be for ever. His companions in utter ruin are "the beast," representing Romanism, and "the false prophet," representing Mahometanism. These systems had been overthrown at the beginning of the Millennium, and were doomed to utter ruin; now Satan comes in for his share at the close of it. The doom of "the beast and the false prophet," representing systems, is figurative, as we saw in Chap. xix. 20 (which see for explanation), means their complete and final overthrow, as what is cast into a "lake of fire and brimstone," is irretrievably ruined. The objector says, "If the language is figurative in the one case, why not in the other? and Satan's punishment is only figurative." The text does not say that the beast and the false prophet "shall be tormented day and night for ever," but only Satan. We say Satan is a person, and not a system. He only represents himself, and being a personal sinner, he must bear personal punishment. The language then, in his case, is strictly literal, and he "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." The lake of fire means Satan's entire overthrow, like that of the beast and false prophet; but then, in his case, there is the additional punishment of "for ever and ever." The persons in these false systems, who were wicked and unconverted, shall be punished as Satan in this "lake of fire for ever and ever." And if the wicked persons in the systems were substituted for the beast and the false prophet, then the language would have its literal fulfilment, as well as in the case of Satan's systems, as systems have no future existence, and therefore they are punished now; persons, as persons, have

a future existence, and, if impenitent, they "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." Their doom is final and eternal. The sinners converted in these systems shall share the glories of the New Jerusalem. Many men in a bad system rise above the tenets of the system, and believe in Jesus to the salvation of their souls.

Lessons.—(1) A warning to sinners to flee from the wrath to come, by laying hold of Christ and him crucified. He is the only hope of the sinner in any system, and "him that cometh unto him he will in no wise cast out."
 (2) Satan retains his character of deceiver till the end.
 (3) The security of the saints. Though compassed about they are not overcome, but are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

VERSES II-15.—*And I saw a great white throne. . . . And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

We have here an account of the general judgment.

1. The throne. It is "a great white throne." It is "great" on account of the *number of seats on it*. The saints shall be elevated to judge the world with Christ, as approving of the sentence which the Judge shall pronounce—"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. vi. 2). On account of the *great number to be judged* of all nations of the world from the beginning. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. v. 10). It is a "white throne." This denotes its purity. There is no partiality here. He who is the Judge knows the secrets and purposes of all. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Kings and their subjects are treated with the same impartiality. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right"?

2. The Judge. Says John, "I saw him that sat on it" (the throne). The judge is the Lord Jesus Christ. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John v. 22). The Judge hath all power in

heaven and in earth. He is "King of kings and Lord of lords." He is "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending."

"The earth and the heaven fled away" from his face. This prepares the way for the general judgment. Peter tells us (2 Pet. iii. 7-10): "But the heavens and the earth, which are now . . . are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment. But the day of the Lord will come . . . in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise . . . the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up." This refers of course to the starry heavens, when "the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood; and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven" (Joel ii. 31; Matt. xxiv. 29, 30). When the consummation of all things was completed "the earth and the heaven fled away." "And there was found no place for them." When they had fulfilled the end for which they were created—the earth for the abode of man, and the heavenly bodies to give them light—they pass away, as their presence does not seem to be needed. Whether the earth, after it is purified by fire, is to be the abode of the "holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God" (Chap. xxi. 10), is a doubtful question. At any rate, in her present state, "there was found no place for" her. Even if it should be the abode of the New Jerusalem it will have no need of the sun, as we learn from Chap. xxii. 5: "They shall need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light."

3. The judgment. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." The child of a span long, as well as the sire of a hundred years, must take their place in the same general judgment before the Judge, who is here called God. As God he has the attribute of omniscience to judge them, and the power of omnipotence to assign them their respective destinations. "And the books were opened." The books mean the Bible and conscience. The Bible is the standard of judgment to those who had a revelation; and conscience, the standard to the heathen who had no revelation—who "had not the

law, but were a law unto themselves" (Rom. ii. 14-16). "And another book was opened, which is the book of life." This would appear to be a chronicle of the events of every man's life, corresponding to what his conscience says of him, and what the Bible says of him, but different from the other "book of life," mentioned in the last verse of this chapter. And this book shows to him that he gets a perfectly fair trial. The Bible and this book correspond to those who had a revelation; and conscience and this book correspond to those who had no revelation. The Judge, who is omniscient, can let him see all his life chronicled in this book before him, and his conscience sees that everything is correct, and whether to hear the "Well done, good and faithful servant," or "Depart from me, ye cursed," he sees he gets a fair trial. And even before the assembled universe, and with the saints as jurors—for the saints shall judge the world—the Judge will let all see that he does right, and will let the man's own conscience testify that the sentence is according to righteous judgment. It is quite common among men to keep a "pass-book." It is sent to the shop with the person who gets goods. While the shopkeeper marks in the debtor's pass-book the amount due, he also marks in his own ledger the same sum. On the day of reckoning, the two books are compared and found to agree, and thus the debtor is shown that he is dealt fairly and honestly with; so at the day of judgment, God's chronicle book corresponds with the conscience book, and the universe sees, and the man himself sees, that the Judge of all the earth doeth right.

"And the dead were judged out of those things . . . according to their works." "Those things" refer to their bad or good deeds recorded in the books. The ground of judgment to the wicked will be their own evil deeds. The ground of judgment to the righteous will be the obedience of Christ for them, reckoned to them, and rewarded in them. And now, like the others here, they are judged according to their works, but it is the works of Christ, on whom they believed, rewarded in them. While the wicked are punished always for their works, or on account of their works, it is nowhere said in the Bible that the righteous are rewarded on account of their works. They are

rewarded according to their works, as getting a higher or lower place in heaven, as they have been more or less faithful since they believed in Christ. I may remark, that the omniscient Judge does not need to keep a book; but, in deference to human judgment, the idea is propounded that men may see, and the heavenly inhabitants, that he acts legally and on the strict merits of the case.

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it." We understand the term literally here. How many have perished by drowning in the mighty ocean! These shall all rise at the last day to be judged. As the graves give up their dead, so shall the sea give up its dead. "And death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them." "Death" would seem to be here personified; like a wild beast, it has devoured its victims, and it must now give them up. It was a consequence of sin. "The wages of sin is death." It has served its purpose, and is now no longer needed as the result of sin. It is to be cast into the lake of fire, as we learn in the next verse; and it delivers up its dead, as having no longer any power over them. "Hell" (or hades), as the word in the original may mean—for it has various meanings—is to deliver "up the dead" to judgment. "Hell" (or hades), sometimes means the place of punishment of the wicked separated from the body, as in the case of the rich man (Luke xvi. 23), "In hell" (or hades), he lifted up his eyes, being in torments. Sometimes it means "the region of darkness and insensibility in which the dead repose." (See Article on Hell, in *Eadie's Encyclopædia*.) In the case of Christ's state from death to the resurrection (Acts ii. 27), "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," it could not mean that his soul was in the hell of the wicked, or even in purgatory, as it went direct to heaven, for he says to the thief on the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in *Paradise*," which means the third heaven. (Compare 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4.) The above article says, "It is generally easy to see, from the connexion, in what sense the word is used." We think then, according to the context, that the word "hell" (or hades), here—as it means the invisible region—implies that the whole region of the dead must give up those in it to judgment. "And they were judged every man

according to their works." We have seen already that the wicked are judged and punished on the ground of their works; and that the righteous are judged on the ground of their works, but these are the works of Christ, reckoned to them and rewarded in them when they believe in him, and that they get a higher or lower place in heaven as they have been more or less faithful in his cause from their conversion.

4. The consequences of the judgment. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." And now, as all sublunary things have come to an end, as "death" has lost for ever its power to hurt, and "hell" (or hades), its place to hold, they are both cast into the lake of fire. That is, as in the case of Satan, in the 10th verse above, they are utterly and irretrievably ruined or destroyed. We showed in the above case, that to be cast into hell was to be irretrievably ruined, and so here, in the case of death and hell. "This is the second death." That is, their complete destruction. At the general judgment death and hell were deprived of their power to hold their victims, now they are irretrievably and finally ruined. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." This book is called "the Lamb's book of life" (Chap. xxi. 27), seeming to contain the names of his own children, washed in his blood and sanctified by his Spirit. Their names are written here, not for their works, but for the works of Christ reckoned to them and rewarded in them, and they get the benefits by dwelling with him for ever and ever. And all whose names are not found here are the subjects of this terrible doom, cast into the lake of fire. Persons have not only their complete ruin, but they suffer, like Satan, the vengeance of eternal fire. What a lesson to us, and warning, to seek to have our names written in this book, and to escape the fearful punishment which is reserved for all who refuse to believe in Jesus to the saving of their souls.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XX.

1. Who is this "angel who has the key of the bottomless pit"?—We believe he is the Lord Jesus Christ, as he is said, in Chap. i. 18, to "have the keys of hell and of death."
2. Why is Satan called "the dragon"?—To show that he is the same as that cast out of heaven for fighting with Christ and his angels (Chap. xii. 9).
3. Why are his angels not bound with him, as they were cast out with him?—Because, we think, they are suffered to go through the world, even in the Millennium,—which has more or less sin in it,—to test God's people, and prepare recruits for Satan against the battle of Gog and Magog at the close of it.
4. Why is "a seal set on him"?—To secure that he will do no injury during this period, and that he is completely in Christ's power.
5. What is meant by "the thousand years"?—The period of the Millennium.
6. When is it to commence?—When the great Antichrist shall have been overthrown.
7. When is this likely to take place?—We think about A.D. 2015. As, taking Daniel's "time, and times, and the dividing of time" (Chap. vii. 25), and Chap. xiii. 5 of the present book, as to the "forty and two months," or 1260 prophetic years, and dating from A.D. 755, when the Pope became a little horn, or assumed temporal power, it brings us to A.D. 2015, or the beginning of the Millennium.
8. How long is the Millennium to continue?—On the year-day theory, or computing a day for a year, it would extend over 360,000 or 365,000 years.
9. What time does the "little season" refer to?—The period from the close of the Millennium, and during the battle of Gog and Magog, till the final consummation of all things.
10. What is meant by the "thrones"?—The seats of judgment of magistrates and ministers, as the representatives of the revived "nations" (verse 3), in the Millennium.
11. What is the need of these functionaries in the State and the Church, when Satan is bound from deceiving the nations?—There is still more or less sin in the world—grace being the rule and sin the exception—and the judges are needed to judge the ungodly, and the ministers to preach to them, during this period.

12. What "judgment was given unto them"?—The ordinary dispensation of justice in temporal things in the State and spiritual things in the Church.

13. Who are "the souls"?—The same as those under the altar (Chap. vi. 9), who were martyred by Pagan Rome, and those by Papal Rome and other false systems, for the truth.

14. What is meant by the beast and his image?—Pagan Rome means the beast, and Papal Rome means his image, imitating him in the form of the Pope as a temporal sovereign.

15. What is meant by the "mark upon their foreheads," and "in their hands"?—As the forehead is the emblem of intellectual strength, and the hand of bodily strength, both are to be subordinated to the Pope.

16. How do "they" (the "nations")—for the word "they" has for its antecedent "nations"—"live and reign with Christ a thousand years"?—The revived "nations," in their representatives on the bench, or "thrones," to judge the ungodly, and in the pulpit to preach to the ungodly, shall live and reign with Christ in spirit, on the earth—as there is no place mentioned—during the term of their natural life, and after death complete the period, in reigning with him on his throne in heaven as kings and priests.

17. How do "the souls live and reign with Christ a thousand years"?—They live and reign as kings and priests with Christ on his throne, as the nations do, rejoicing in the progress of the truth for which they suffered, during this period of its revival, as this progress is revealed to them.

18. Does the living imply they were dead?—No; but instead of complaining, as those "under the altar," they are now living and reigning.

19. Who are meant by "the rest of the dead"?—The spiritually dead, who were not revived at the beginning of the Millennium, or during that period.

20. What is meant by "the first resurrection"?—"The first resurrection" is a resurrection, or a revival of "the nations,"—a resurrection of souls to holiness at the beginning of the Millennium, in opposition to a revival of souls to sin at the close of it, implied in Satan's deceiving the nations again (verse 8).

21. Who is pronounced "blessed and holy"? The man who "has part in the first resurrection;" that is, who is one of the revived nations, or who has been the subject of regeneration at the beginning of the Millennium, "on such the second death hath no power."

22. What is meant by the second death?—Eternal death, or the separation of the soul from God for ever.

23. How are those who have part in the first resurrection "priests of God and of Christ"?—They are a holy people, dedicated to God's service, and by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit presenting their "bodies a living sacrifice" in Christ's service.

24. How do they reign with Christ a thousand years?—See answer to Question 16.

25. Is Christ's reign in the Millennium personal or spiritual?—We think spiritual. For (1) He is to come, according to 1 Thes. iii. 13, "with all his saints;" and if he came thus personally at the beginning of it, the number of the saints could not be complete. (2) "Every eye shall see him," according to Chap. i. 7; but if the righteous only are raised at the beginning of the Millennium, as some say, how could every eye see him coming? (3) Besides, John says (xvi. 7), Christ must be absent to send the Spirit, whereas if the reign were personal, how could we expect the Spirit for the conversion of the world?

26. What is meant by the second resurrection, as some call it?—There is no second resurrection mentioned in the text; but as to "the rest of the dead" living not again till the end of the thousand years, it has been answered already in Question 19—the spiritually dead who were not quickened at the beginning, or during the Millennium, and who rise as a resurrection of souls to sin, at the close of it.

27. What is meant by "the thousand years being expired"?—The thousand years of the Millennium.

28. Why is Satan let loose?—To try the people, as he did Job, to see what is in them.

29. How long is he to be let loose?—A "little season" (verse 3), likely just as long as will test the faith of the saints, and lay bare the unfaithfulness of sinners, he gathering the latter, as volunteers, to the battle of Gog and Magog.

30. What is meant by the battle of "Gog and Magog"?—A battle, we think, of truth against error, in a spiritual point of view.

31. But may not the battle have a temporal aspect, and mean a literal battle;—Yes; and prepare the way for the spiritual one.

32. What errors are to be rooted out by the truth?—The remnants of Antichrist, as Romanism, Mahometanism, Hindooism, and other false systems.

33. Where is the spiritual battle to be fought?—"On the four quarters of the earth."

34. Where is the temporal battle to be fought, if there be one?—This is uncertain, as there are many conjectures about it.

35. Who are "Gog and Magog"?—They are introduced to us in Ezek., Chaps. xxxviii., xxxix., and may include the Western parts of Asia and Europe, representing the Japhetic nations; also the Eastern nations of Asia, Persia, India, China, Japan and the Islands.

36. What is meant by "the camp of the saints and the holy city"?—It means—taking the type from the tabernacling of the children of Israel in the wilderness, and the holy city, or Jerusalem, representing the Church—the whole body of the saints, wherever they are scattered.

37. What is the meaning of the "fire" devouring their enemies?—The wrath of God from heaven on Gog and Magog, as the vials before on the Romish system.

38. Is the punishment of the beast and the false prophet of the same nature as that of Satan?—We think not. Their punishment, representing systems, is only figurative, and means the complete ruin of their systems; but Satan is a person, and his punishment is real, and "for ever and ever."

39. Why are nations, or systems, always punished now, but individuals are not?—Nations, or systems, as such, have no future existence, and consequently they are punished now; persons, as persons, have a future existence, and, if impenitent, if God does not punish them now, he has all eternity to do his work.

40. Why is the "throne" represented as "white"?—Denoting the purity of the judgment.

41. Why is it represented as "great"?—On account of the number of seats on it, and as to the saints approving of the sentence of the Judge; also of the great number to be judged.

42. Who is the Judge?—The Lord Jesus Christ (John v. 22).

43. What doctrine do we find raised here in the text, that the "dead stand before God"?—The doctrine of the Deity of Christ. He must have the attributes of omnipotence and omniscience to fulfil his functions.

44. What are "the books"?—The Bible and conscience. The Bible is the standard of judgment to those who have a revelation; and conscience, the standard to the heathen, who have not a revelation.

45. What is "another book" which "was opened"?—It would appear to be a chronicle of every man's life, corresponding to what his conscience says of him, and what the Bible says of him, and this book teaches him that he gets a fair trial.

46. What is the meaning "of those things which were written in the book"?—"Those things" refer to the bad or good deeds recorded in the books.

47. Then do they get rewards or punishments "according to their works"?—In the case of the righteous, they are rewarded for the works of Christ reckoned to them and rewarded in them, their works being the evidence of their faith in him; but in the case of the wicked, they are rewarded, or punished, for their works.

48. Does the Bible warrant us in saying that the righteous are rewarded on account of their works?—It nowhere states this; but they get a higher or lower place in heaven, "according as they have been more or less faithful and zealous in Christ's cause since they believed."

49. What is meant by the sea giving "up the dead which were in it"?—It means that all who were drowned in its depths shall be delivered up to judgment.

50. What is the meaning of "death giving up the dead which were in it"?—Death seems to be here personified; like a wild beast, it has devoured its victims, and it has now to give them up to judgment.

51. What is the meaning of "hell giving up the dead which were in it"?—As "hell" (or *hades*), means the invisible region, it implies that the whole region of the dead is to give up those in it to the general judgment.

52. How are they judged?—"According to their works." (See answer to Question 47.)

53. What is meant by "death and hell being cast into the lake of fire"?—It means, as we have seen already, in the case of the beast and the false prophet, their complete ruin.

54. What is meant by "the second death"?—It means here, no recovery from this eternal destruction.

55. What is the doom of the person "not written in the book of life"?—He "was cast into the lake of fire," which means, in the case of persons, not only their complete ruin, but like Satan, to be the subjects of eternal punishment. (See Chap. xiv. 10, 11.)

CHAPTER XXI.

THIS chapter gives us an outline of the "new heaven and the new earth;" the New Jerusalem; a description of the Church in her beauty; the wall surrounding the New Jerusalem, with a grand picture of the city included; and the happiness of the nations walking on its streets.

VERSES 1-4.—*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth . . . for the former things are passed away.*

These verses exhibit the vision of "a new heaven and a new earth," with the happiness of the inhabitants.

1. The first part of the vision is the "new heaven and the new earth." Peter, in his second epistle (2 Pet. iii. 10-13), speaks of "the heavens being on fire," and of the earth and "the works that are therein being burned up," and of "the new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." The present earth, according to this statement, is to pass away with burning, together with the heaven surrounding it, meaning the atmosphere, we apprehend, with the sun and moon and whatever belongs to it as necessary appendages to it in its present state of existence. This is in order to prepare for "a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." Chapter xxii. 3, says, "There shall be no more curse." The ground was cursed for man's sake, but by the fire the curse is burnt out of it. The earth and man were both defiled by sin, but the one is purified by fire and the other by blood. The Lamb has redeemed the latter from the curse (Gal. iii. 13). It is said that, during the last 200 years, some eleven intensely bright stars, or comets, have appeared in our world, which have been considered by philosophers to be worlds on fire. Having served their purpose, they are now burnt up. And, in all probability,

this earth of ours, at its close, may appear to the inhabitants of other planets to be a world on fire, as these did to us. And, for ought we know, it may be prepared in this way—purified by fire—to be the future abode of the saints, or the future heaven; for, says John, in the second part of the vision, “I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” “Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them.” It would take a considerable time for the earth to cool down for their reception, hence the expression of John, “I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven.” But wherever God is, there is heaven. And even if this earth is to be the future abode of the saints, when it is purified with fire, and God is there, who would not say that that is the very essence of heaven? The New Jerusalem descends, “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” The figure is significant of beauty, intimating that the redeemed Church is beautiful through Christ’s comeliness put upon her—lovely with that loveliness by which she has been redeemed by her once crucified, but now exalted and risen Redeemer—desiring to please him in all things who so loved her—in a word, she is now before her husband what he redeemed her for (Ephes. v. 27), “that he might present her to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that she should be holy and without blemish.”

“And there was no more sea.” It was evaporated by the burning of the earth. And, besides, there is no more call for it in the new earth, for it is said of the inhabitants, “They shall hunger no more, neither *thirst* any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat” (Chap. vii. 16). This just teaches us the economy in God’s laws; he does not keep anything when there is no use for it, as Christ never wrought a miracle for the mere pleasing of men.

The “great voice” here, which thus reverberates from the throne of heaven within, must be that of Christ himself, as in Chap. xix. 5. No wonder that he speaks when his Church is interested, for he long since took an interest in her, when he redeemed her; and as he loved her from

the first, he loves her to the last. The "tabernacle" here implies God's presence, as he was with her in the wilderness. Also, "they shall be his people, and he shall be their God." Surely this is sufficient. What more do they want when they have his presence with them, and when they are to claim him as their own, joined to him in a perpetual covenant which shall never be broken.

The third part of the vision is represented by God wiping the tears from his people's eyes. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." As a father stoops down and wipes away the tears from his child's eyes; so here, God wipes away all tears from his people's eyes. On account of sin they had trials and afflictions—"these are they that have come out of great tribulation"—and as a result, many tears. They did not understand why they were subjected to so many losses and crosses and trials and disappointments, and so many tears, but now they see the reason, when they are led to know that their trials were so much scaffolding to the building going on within. When St. Paul's cathedral in London was being built by Sir Christopher Wren, the people wondered as they saw piece after piece of the scaffolding going up. They could not at all comprehend the meaning of the shape it assumed, nor the use of much of it, as it hid the building from their view. But when the scaffolding was taken down and the grand structure appeared before their astonished gaze, then they could see the use of the scaffolding and the design of the architect. So when our Heavenly Father sends losses and crosses and trials and tears, as so much scaffolding to the spiritual building going on within, and which often hides it from our own gaze and that of the world without, we cannot comprehend the meaning of it at all; but when the scaffolding is taken down, when God himself, like a tender father, stoops down and wipes away the tears from our eyes, and the spiritual temple that has grown up beneath them appears to our view, then shall we know fully, and not till then, the use of the scaffolding and the grand design of the Great Architect.

"And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." That

eternal life which the saints have now entered upon after the general judgment, shuts out all further death. The body died once as the result of sin. The fear even which the regenerate often entertained in this life of death is now completely removed, and nothing comes into their minds to engender a trace of sadness. Sorrow and crying and pain come also as the result of sin, and they are often felt keenly as death approaches. But not only is death removed in "the new heaven and the new earth," but the pain that used to accompany it is removed. Both disappear together, and their accompaniments, "sorrow and crying," are seen no more. God has wiped away the tears from his people's eyes. These were their trials, but they have all gone, and not a trace of them remains. See, in every building, what hammering of the nails, and hewing of the quoins, and sawing of the timber! Oh! if the stones could feel and speak, and the timber cry out, what a howl they would raise that they are subjected to such grinding. But this was all necessary to the completion of the building. So we may sometimes say our lot is hard, and our crosses are weighty, and our tears numerous, but every stroke was needed to fit us for the great spiritual temple in heaven; and when our Father himself, by wiping away our tears, lets us see the design of all this, then we shall say,—O blessed afflictions, and losses, and crosses, and tears that in the Spirit's hands ministered to the spiritual building; without you we had never been so fitted for the spiritual building; without the Holy Spirit's hewing and polishing we had never been fitted as suitable stones for the great spiritual temple in heaven! O blessed Father that laid them on! O blessed Spirit that used them for our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace! O blessed Saviour that gave us grace to sustain us under them! "Thou wast wounded for our transgressions, Thou wast bruised for our iniquities, Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood and we shall reign for ever and ever."

"The former things are passed away." These were sin and sorrow and trial and death. And now nothing is left to mar the happiness of God's people throughout an endless eternity. This is a state of happiness worth striving after, worthy of our highest ambition, and all to

be obtained, without fail, by believers in Christ. God sent his Son for our redemption. This Son lives for us and dies for us, working out a perfect righteousness, available to every poor sinner as soon as he believes. This Son rises, as the evidence of his finished work and its acceptance by the Father for our salvation. The Spirit applies it, and makes us able and willing to accept it. And no wonder that God wipes away all tears from his people's eyes, for the whole process of his acting, from first to last, was for his own glory and their good, and to make them the recipients of his glory.

VERSES 5-8.—*And he that sat upon the throne said . . . which is the second death.*

These verses set forth some additional features of John's vision, seen in the former part of the chapter, especially the promises of blessing on the righteous and threatenings on the wicked.

I.—Some features of the vision.

1. The reality of it. "Behold I make all things new." Before, it appeared in prospect; now, it is reduced to a reality. The Judge is about to carry out what he showed to John with reference to the "new heavens and the new earth." The person sitting on the throne here is evidently the Lord Jesus Christ, the Judge in this great assize. He asks John to write a statement of the facts—"He said unto me, Write." The event is of such importance that he wants John to write it down that "he that runneth may read." Here we have a fine proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures. It was never said by an audible voice from heaven to any since the time of John—"Write," as here, or "what thou seest, write in a book" (Chap. i. 11); or such as God said to Moses, "Write thou these words" (Exod. xxxiv. 27). It has been said, Why may not writers now be inspired as well as Moses and John? While Baxter, and Bunyan, and Boston, &c., are excellent writers, yet God has never said to any of them, as to these men, "Write these words in a book." Why? Because the canon of revelation is closed, and no human writings

now are to be placed on a level with the Word of God. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Pet. i. 21).

2. The reason assigned for recording it. "For these words are true and faithful." The "for" connects the latter clause with the preceding, and assigns a reason why the words should be recorded for the benefit of posterity and the good of the Church in all time to come. The "words" are the words of him who is the essence of truth, the Lord Jesus Christ, who "sat upon his throne," words well worthy of recording—worthy to be "graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever."

3. The completion of this new creation. "It is done." The dialogue between Christ and John is carried on. "He said unto me—It is done;" that is, that the work of the "new heaven and the new earth" is complete. I can as easily accomplish this by my fiat, as when at first I "created the heaven and the earth" out of nothing. And he assigns the reason to John why he makes such an announcement. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." I am before all things, says Christ, in effect, and have all power to create or to destroy—to take down, if I will, the former machinery, and remodel it, and make out of it an entirely new creation. Whether the word "I am," here refers to the incommunicable name, recorded in Exod. iii. 14, or is the assertion of his eternity of "Alpha and Omega," makes little, if any, difference, for the two latter epithets, the names of the first and last of the Hebrew letters, are sufficiently indicative of his Godhead, without the first epithet at all. We are strongly of opinion that the word "I am" is not a mere incident of the language, but conveys to John and the future Church his great title, "I AM," by which he was known of old, as the Jehovah the Self-Existent One, having all power in heaven and in earth, existing from eternity to eternity.

II.—The promise of blessings on the righteous and threatenings on the wicked.

1. The blessings on the righteous. "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." Here, on earth, the believer hungered and

thirsted after righteousness, but he could only receive partially the living streams of the water of life, on account of the veil of flesh and blood coming between (at the best sanctification is incomplete in this life); now that veil is taken away, and, with spiritual bodies in the New Jerusalem, fully sanctified, and souls thirsting more and more for rills of joy from the Divine presence, Christ fully satisfies the wants of our craving appetites, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." I have it in abundance, and I will supply all his wants. Now the promise at Jacob's well to the woman (John iv. 14) is fully verified: the rill began on earth,—as soon as the sinner believed,—flowing from the fountain of a Saviour's fulness; and from the same fountain it is still supplied in more copious streams, satisfying every need, and filling every craving aspiration throughout an endless eternity. I gave it "freely" at the first, I give it "freely" to the last. Another part of the promised blessing is the victory of faith. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." John, in his first Epistle (chap. v. 4), says, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Faith gains the victory, for it lays hold of the Lamb of God (Chap. xii. 11) through whom it becomes the real conqueror. He then that gets the victory through union with the Lord Jesus Christ "shall inherit all things." That is, shall get all the blessings of the New Jerusalem. "And I will be his God and he shall be my son." What more does the believer want to complete his happiness—to have God for his God, and to have the privilege of being his son? This is the very essence of happiness. This is the summit of infinite joy. Surely such a consummation is worth striving after, is worth seeking to obtain. Christ has purchased it for all who believe in him, for all who seek this victory through faith in him, for all who rest on his finished work. The victory of faith is a victory of union with him. There can be no victory without this. Let us seek, through faith in him, wrought in us by his Holy Spirit, to "overcome," and then we shall be his sons. And the Spirit now is "the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." (Eph. i. 14).

2. The threatenings on the wicked. "But the fearful . . . shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." The "fearful" means the spiritual cowards. Such were many of the Jews in Christ's time, who, when they heard him speak of the difficulties they must encounter who follow him, said, "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" and turned away from following him (John vi. 60, 66). So it is among the Heathen who have an inclination to become Christians, but who, from spiritual cowardice, are unwilling to brave the reproaches which such a cause would subject them to. So among the Romanists at home in Ireland. However many of them might be disposed to become Protestants, as, doubtless, there are, they are afraid to encounter the opposition and come out manfully on the side of Protestant Christianity. Some of them have done so; but they have had generally to emigrate, to be free from the treatment to which such a step exposes them. Those of them who would fain come out from a doomed system, but refuses to do so on account of fear, are the spiritual cowards, and are among the class who are exposed to this fearful threatening.

"The unbelieving" are the faithless, the hypocrites, the mere professors, like the Pharisees of old, who, in whatever Church, only have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof. They have no real faith in Christ. They have no real love for him. And hence they are exposed to this fearful doom, "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone."

"The abominable" are the unholy, the unconverted; those whose thoughts, words, and actions are evil, as swearers, drunkards, gamblers, Sabbath-breakers, who have no fear of God before their eyes. Their doom, if they continue thus, will be this "lake of fire and brimstone."

"The murderers" are those that take away human life unjustly, as in the case of brigands, assassins, or even by persecution unto death for conscience sake. They are treasuring up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and shall have their portion, if their sins are not repented of and washed away in the blood of Jesus, in this lake.

"The whoremongers" are adulterers and polygamists (including Mormons and others of this class) who delight in vile deeds and wanton imaginations—violaters of the seventh commandment, restraining not the body, nor its appetites, but indulging every vile passion—they shall have their part in this "lake" reserved for the ungodly.

"The sorcerers" are the charmers, and wizards, and employers of magic, and such as have recourse to improper expedients to know what is to happen, without consulting the mind of God in his word. They want to be wise beyond what is written; and like Saul with the witch of Endor, are trying to get the mind of God in a way he has not revealed himself. Such expedients lead to disaster in the end, as in the case already cited, and prepare for the doom promised. Parties who pretend to foretell future events are not to be received into our houses, nor are we to bid them God speed, for they who do so are partakers of their evil deeds (2 John 10-11).

The idolators are those who make graven images to worship them; and not only this, but are taken up with any sensual object, to worship it instead of God. The drunkard, who has no delight in anything else but his cups, and can worship nothing else but Bacchus, is an idolator. The gambler, who has his mind wholly intent on making money by this haphazared craft of getting it, without any compensation, is bowing down before the idol of gambling. The card-sharper, whose mind is debauched by this meanest of all lotteries, and which is, alas, often the fashionable pastime of the rich, is an idolater at the shrine of this species of gambling. The parties following horse-racing and coursing, and all such worldly amusements, are worshipping the god of folly; and having their backs turned on God, are as much idolators as the men who set a picture before them, and fall down and worship it. Folly and fashion and vanity are their god, and if these sins are not repented of and washed away in the blood of Christ, this terrible doom, "the lake of fire and brimstone," must be their portion.

The "liars" are a class, alas, so common, that the name requires no explanation. The doom of Ananias and Sapphira in the fifth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, is

a proof of the hatred of God to the act of lying, even in this life : and he has here shown his abhorrence of it when he threatens it with the punishment announced, "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." Further, it means imposing on others by false pretences and deception in any form. Let truth then be our ruling motive in all that we say and do, and let the example of Christ rule our lives—"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Peter xx. 22).

For exposition of "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone," see Chap. xx. 10. And the second death means, in the case of persons, their everlasting punishment, as in the case of Satan. (See same Chapter.)

VERSES 9-21.—*And there came unto me one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials . . . and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.*

John, here, in the isle of Patmos, saw the vision of the Church, or the New Jerusalem, under the aspect of a city with walls and gates. We have brought before us in these verses—

I.—The city, the holy Jerusalem.

1. We have the names of the city. She is called "*the bride, the Lamb's wife*." No wonder that she has his name put on her, for she is washed in his blood and sanctified by his Spirit, and made fit for this position—to be the bride of such an honoured husband. Properly then she is called the "holy Jerusalem."

We have seen already who the seven angels are (Chap. xvi.), who had the "vials," or "the seven last plagues"—the ministers of the Gospel. And one of them here, in all probability that one who in Chap. xvi. 2, poured out his vial on the men who had the mark of the beast, and was commissioned in Chap. xvii. 1, to show John the judgment on a degenerate world, would be the more likely to point out to him the bride, the Lamb's wife, the type of a regenerate world. Who this angel is who talked with John, and gave him such a vision of the future Church, and before whom John fell down to worship (Chap. xxii. 8), is

a difficult question. As he tells John in a previous Chapter (xix. 10) that he was "his fellow-servant, and of his brethren that have the testimony of Jesus," is it not likely that he was John the Baptist, than whom, says Christ, "a greater prophet had not arisen"? He transported John in "spirit to a great and high mountain," probably, in a figurative point of view, to Mount Zion (Isa. ii. 2), the Gospel Church, and gave him a glimpse of the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God. She is called "*the holy Jerusalem*," for nothing unclean or unholy shall enter into her. The Church is described in Ephes. v. 27, "a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; holy and without blemish." The city of the New Jerusalem is beautiful, for she is irradiated with "the glory of God." The glory of anything means its gloss, or the shining out of its perfections, as the glory of a candle, or the gloss of fine silk; so the glory of the city, or the bride, the Lamb's wife, has the glory of God reflected on her and from her. She appears comely in Christ's comeliness, or Christ's righteousness, who "loved the Church and gave himself for it."

2. We have the light of the city. "It was like unto a stone most precious." The glory of her light shone with brilliancy, as a precious stone, "even like a jasper stone." The jasper was a species of quartz stone of a very variegated colour. It is susceptible of a very fine polish, and was one of the stones used in the high priest's breast-plate (Exod. xxxix. 13). It is found principally in Persia and the Indies, and sometimes in Syria. It is used here to represent the beauty of the Church, the Lamb's wife, and it is a fit emblem of her beauty and glory. The jasper stone was so clear, that it reflected one's image as crystal. So the Church, or the holy Jerusalem, in the text, is so clear, washed in Christ's blood and sanctified by his Spirit, that she reflects the image of her glorious Head as she descends "out of heaven from God."

3. The wall of the city. "It was great and high." This denotes the security of those within. "Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks" (Isa. xxiv. 1). And its greatness and height would indicate this. It cannot be stormed on account of its strength. It cannot be

scaled on account of its height. The "city, the holy Jerusalem," is safe from assaults. All God's people, washed in Christ's blood, sanctified by his Spirit, and clothed in his righteousness, are safe as heaven itself is safe.

4. The gates of the city. "Twelve" represent the abundant room for entrance. In all probability they correspond to the twelve tribes of Israel. None are excluded who do not exempt themselves, for the gates are numerous enough to allow parties to enter from all quarters. "And at the gates twelve angels." This denotes the attendants, directing all the way to enter in, through Christ, the "new and living way." The "New Jerusalem" is the Church, and the "angels" are the messengers, or ministers, who point out the way of entrance to sinners. The former verse represents the beauty of the redeemed, who have entered with the glory of God upon them. This is the way of entering to comers from all quarters. It shows how ample is the room, and how numerous the sentinels, or messengers, to guide them. "And names written thereon." These names seem to have reference to Ezek. xlviii. 31-35, where the gates of the city had the names of the tribes. So here, as the heavenly Jerusalem is the antitype of the spiritual Israel, redeemed with the blood of the Lamb, her gates are marked with their names, which the text says, "are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel."

"On the east three gates . . . on the west three gates." The position of the gates shows that they suit all comers, and are an encouragement to sinners that heaven is open in all directions to receive them. Let none shut themselves out when heaven is so wide, and so well adapted for entrance.

5. The foundations of the city. It had "twelve foundations." This refers, probably, to the twelve Apostles as the founders of the Christian Church—"built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Ephes. ii. 20). "And in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb." This explains the former clause—that the Church was built upon the foundation, or teaching, of the Apostles, and

this foundation cemented by Jesus Christ, as "the chief corner stone." "In them," that is, in the foundations, "the names of the Apostles." The reference here is evidently to the custom of depositing coins in the foundation of a building, which is continued to the present day. As the building would at any future time reveal the names of the architect and the founder, and the object and time of its construction; so the names of the twelve Apostles inlaid, or deposited, in the foundations of the New Jerusalem, would show to all its inhabitants, throughout eternity, the object of its construction—to be a memorial of Christ's great love to the Church, and that it had its foundation on the twelve Apostles, with Christ himself as the corner stone. The twelve Apostles were sent by the Lamb to teach and to found this Church (Matt. xxviii. 19) which is now his bride, his redeemed one. He is called the Lamb, as being sacrificed for her—"the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

6. The measure of the city. "And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof." The angel who talked with John here, is the same of whom an exposition is given in the 9th verse. At Chap. xi. 1, John is commanded to measure "the temple of God," &c. Here, the angel does it himself. The question may arise—Why in the one case is John to do it? and in the other, the angel? In the 11th Chapter, the reference seems to be to the Church on earth; here, to the New Jerusalem, or the Church in heaven. John, as a man in the body, seems to be capable to measure the Church on earth, or the Church militant, the angel, out of the body, only capable to measure the Church triumphant in heaven. Its grandness is so surpassing; its glory so sublime, that a creature in the body could not possibly measure and describe its magnificence. It is reserved for the angel to do this.

The "golden reed" is the line used. In the 11th Chapter it was "a reed like unto a rod;" here, it is "a golden reed," as everything in heaven is in perfection. On the earth the Church had imperfections, and a "reed," or a "rod," is the measuring line; here, the Church is perfection, and it is "a golden reed." In the 11th Chapter

the "rod" was the measure which John used to the New Testament Church to square her discipline and morals, excluding the unholy, and profane, and vile from her sealing ordinances, and enclosing her as a vineyard from the world. This was requisite, as there was imperfection in her best services. Here "a golden rod" is used, to show that the Church is now perfection—perfected through Christ's blood and Spirit, and reigning with him. Now she needs no discipline, as she is perfect in holiness, and all her members are without spot before the throne, "kings and priests unto God." The city is complete, for she is the bride, the Lamb's wife. "The gates" are complete, for they are numerous enough and wide enough, as an evidence that none were excluded who wished to enter. "The wall" is complete, for it is high enough to keep out all intruders, and to secure the safety of all within.

"And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth. John goes on still to describe the city at greater length. He had shown already the perfection of the "holy Jerusalem," as to its inhabitants, as to its wall, as to its gates, and as to its foundations; and now he goes on to speak of its structure, as the emblem of strength and impenetrability. No weapon formed against it shall prosper. In warfare, the most skilful generals, as Wellington at Waterloo and Lord Chelmsford in Africa, drew up their troops in the form of a square to resist the onslaught of the enemy. So here, to mark the security of the New Jerusalem, we think, it is represented in the most secure and invulnerable position for its safety against the assailing foe. God's people are now entirely safe in his protection, and this seems to be the idea involved in the text.

"And he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs." This denotes its capacity. It is capable of holding that "great multitude which no man could number" (Chap. vii. 9). And while this is the measure stated, it is merely figurative, showing the dimensions on a large scale of what heaven is. This is just a capacious measure, to give us a human insight of something of the magnitude and extent of the New Jerusalem. "The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal."

This gives us the idea of its symmetry. No human building is equally long and broad and high. It is known in masonry and architecture, that in every building masons must "batter an inch," as it is called, at every height of so many feet, else the building will totter. Here, to show that the building is of God, and that everything done by him is perfect, and excels what man can do at the height of his genius, it is represented as equally broad and long and high. God's work as far excels man's as light excels darkness.

7. The material of the city. This was "pure gold." As gold is the most precious metal, so the heavenly city, being represented as of pure gold, denotes its preciousness. Precious in God's sight "is the death of his saints." And much more so may it be said of them when they are alive in heaven and form the glorious company of the redeemed ones, "not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing," before the throne. Emphatically may the spiritual city be compared to "pure gold." Further, it was "like unto clear glass." It was precious like gold; it was shining like glass. Metaphors are heaped together to describe the beauty and value of the heavenly inhabitants. Precious were they in God's sight when they were redeemed with the blood of his Son, as of a lamb without spot; and beautiful are they when they are compared to the "clear glass," as it reflects the sun in his brilliancy. They reflected the holiness of Christ here, after their conversion, in their life and character, alas! indeed too faintly; they reflect his brightness more yonder, in the heavenly Jerusalem. Here it was like the streaks of the rising sun, yonder it is like the full blaze of his meridian glory.

II.—The wall of the city.

We noticed already the greatness and height of the wall. Now we notice—

1. The measure of the wall. It was "an hundred and forty and four cubits." The cubit was reckoned at a foot and six inches, and understanding the height of the wall literally, this would leave it 216 feet. But we believe the wall, here, is to be taken in a spiritual point of view—for human measure is not applicable to heaven—and that the

wall just means salvation, or the security of those in heaven—"Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks" (Isaiah xxvi. 1). "According to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel." The measure is taken from a human point of view as applied to a building, in all probability to give us a kind of human conception of the greatness of heaven. It is called "the measure of a man." This was taken from the elbow to the end of the middle finger—a measure that, in John's time, was common to the East; and even at the present day, as we are told by those who have been there, it is still common to that country. "That is, of the angel." John here adds an explanation to let the reader know that he is still with the angel, and that when he uses the expression, "the measure of a man," it is still applicable to the angel who had been a man, probably John the Baptist, as we have conjectured already, and accounts for the Baptist's own explanation when John fell down to worship him—"See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets" (Chap. xxii. 9).

2. The material of the wall. And the building of the wall was of jasper. This was a species of quartz rock, hard and durable, and susceptible of a fine polish. The salvation, or security of God's people in heaven, of which the wall is a symbol, is laid deep in the counsels of eternity, secure as the everlasting hills, and durable as the throne of God. It was planned by God in eternity; wrought out in time by the obedience and suffering of Christ, and is applied by the Spirit to all them who believe. Well may the wall which represents such security be said to be built of the jasper stone. (See, for "the city of pure gold," verse 21).

3. The foundations of the wall. The wall was for the protection of the city. We had the height of it (verse 12); the measure of it (verse 17); the material of it (verse 18); and now we come to the foundations of it. "And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones." They had already inlaid in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb; and now they are "garnished with all manner of precious stones." We are not to understand that the foundations

were laid in the form of one on the top of the other ; but that the foundations of the wall were divided into twelve parts, corresponding to the number of the twelve apostles, and each part garnished with a peculiar kind of precious stone.

(1) "The first foundation was jasper." This was the same composition as the material of the wall itself, the foundation and the wall being of a piece. We have seen already the quality of the jasper—that it was a species of quartz, hard and durable, and well-fitted for making sure foundation work. This was a good quality to begin with, and hence the inference that heaven's foundations will never decay nor be destroyed. If the Church here is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Ephes. ii. 20), well may the Church in heaven be secure, when it has the same "corner stone." It cannot perish, for Christ "ever liveth to make intercession for it."

(2) "The second, sapphire." This was a precious stone almost as bright as the diamond, and nearly as hard ; generally it was of a blue colour, and well fitted for foundation work also.

(3) "The third, a chalcedony." This was a species of precious stone of the shell kind, originally brought from Chalcedon, in Asia Minor. It was also hard and durable.

(4) "The fourth, an emerald." The emerald is a precious stone of a deep green colour. It was one of those gems worn in the high priest's breastplate (Exod. xxviii. 18). It was found in Peru and the East Indies, and was once a commodity of Syrian merchandise (Ezek. xxvii. 16).

(5) "The fifth, sardonyx." This was a precious stone, with blending colours of black and red, susceptible of a very high polish. It got its name from its likeness to the sardine stone. It is a species of agate, and is found in great perfection in Judea.

(6) "The sixth, sardius." This precious stone was of a deep red colour. It was susceptible also of a high polish, and was largely used for seals and ornaments. It was found in India, and the ancient Sardis, a city of Lydia, in Asia Minor, whence it got its name.

(7) "The seventh, chrysolite." This was a precious

stone of a yellow golden colour. It was richly valued, and is to be distinguished from the chrysolite of modern days, whose colour is green tinged with yellow.

(8) "The eighth, beryl." This was one of those on the high priest's breastplate, and formed part of the fourth row there. It was, for the most part, of a green colour.

(9) "The ninth, a topaz." This was a stone of various hues, and one of the highest value. It was also on the high priest's breastplate (Exod. xxviii. 17). The finest specimens of this stone are found in the East Indies. It is a gem of a prevailing yellow colour, though many colours are blended in it.

(10) "The tenth, a chrysoprasus." This was a precious stone of a green tinge. It was a species of quartz, and blended green and gold colour together. It must have formed a brilliant appearance with these two rich colours blending.

(11) "The eleventh, a jacinth." This was a stone of a reddish yellow colour. It had a close resemblance to the amethyst.

(12) "The twelfth, an amethyst." The prevailing colour of this precious stone was purple. Among the precious stones it was one of the most valuable. It was also in the high priest's breastplate (Exod. xxxix. 12), and formed the third row among the settings.

All precious stones are remarkable for hardness and endurance; and here they are represented as forming the foundations of the wall of heaven. This is evidently to show its permanence, and not only that, but its preciousness, and to convey to us the idea that heaven's wall has foundations that will never decay, but will be as lasting as God himself. The saints then in heaven are secure, and that for ever.

III.—The gates of the city.

"And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl." The Apostle goes on from the foundations to speak of the gates, which represent the entrance to heaven, and are composed of pearls. It could not be understood that pearls were large enough, each of them to form one gate. We cannot adhere rigidly, in this

place, to the literal interpretation. The design of John is evidently to give us a conception of the beauty of the gates. And as pearls have a beautiful appearance, the meaning would appear to be that the gates had the appearance of being composed of pearls, or the pearl-stones, which has grains in it that sparkle in brightness like the pearl.

"And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." This is the same material as of the city itself. (See verse 18, above.) The question arises—Why are the street and city of the same material? The Church is built "upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." And just as in the holy of holies the mercy-seat, or lid of the ark, representing Christ's propitiatory sacrifice as the ground of his people's redemption, and the cherubim, representing his redeemed ones, were all of a piece; so here the foundation, or street, on which the redeemed stand—the street of the city—and his people composing the city, are of a piece also. In a word, Christ and his people are one. As the foundation, Christ shines in all his beauty, like gold, in laying down his life for us and rising again for our justification, so his people shine in the New Jerusalem, each as a golden gem in his crown.

VERSES 22-27.—*And I saw no temple therein . . . And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth . . . but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

We have here—

1. The temple of the New Jerusalem. It has already been represented as a city. And in most cities there is a temple, or place of worship. John sees no temple, or material structure, as such; but he sees what is better, "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb as the temple of it." Just as the types were done away with when Christ the antitype came, and finished the Old Testament economy on the cross; so here, the temple seems to be dispensed with when the embodiment of it, to whom all its rites and ceremonies referred—the Lamb—is present.

And surely the bodily presence of the Lamb himself, together with the presence of the Lord God Almighty, is a suitable temple without any material structure.

2. The light. "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it." The reason is assigned in the second clause of the verse, "for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." As the Church triumphant in heaven has no need of a material temple while it has the presence of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb; so it has no call for a material sun or moon to give it light, for "the glory of God," reflected with more effulgence than the sun, and more beauty than the moon, is sufficient for this; and the bodily presence of the Lamb adds to the glory of the scene, and further brightens the picture. Surely the beholding, by the saints, of him who gave up himself willingly to die for them, and the radiance reflected of the light of God who sent him, will more than make amends for the want of a material temple and material luminaries, and leave nothing to be desired of the full light and beauty of heaven.

3. The inhabitants. "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it." Who are the inhabitants? Those who are saved of the various nations of the earth, East, West, North, South; and of all grades, from the king on the throne to the meanest subject. There is no distinction in heaven but what grace makes. Some shine with brighter lustre than others, as stars of the first magnitude, having attained to a higher degree of grace here. Others shine less brilliantly. "As one star differeth from another in glory, so also is the resurrection from the dead" (1 Cor. xv. 41, 42). But while there are degrees in glory, all are perfectly happy, being filled with joy according to their respective capacities.

4. The exercise of heaven. They "shall walk in the light of it." While singing, as we have reason to believe, is the chief employment (Chap. xv. 3), this does not exclude the idea of other exercises. As variety is pleasant, so heaven's exercise and employments may be various, but all to the glory of God and for the happiness of the inhabitants. As friends here often walk and talk together, like the two disciples going to Emmaus, and especially when talking of

Christ, have his presence, though sometimes not knowing it; so part of the exercise of heaven may consist of friends walking together, and conversing of the great theme of redeeming love—about Christ's death and sufferings on their behalf; about his resurrection and intercession; about his love for them; and the thought of having his presence with them, and knowing it, will enhance their happiness. The very presence of the loved object will call forth all their gratitude and fill them with love and admiration, and remind them of the ransom paid down for their redemption.

“And the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.” A question arises here—Whether does this mean that kings in heaven shall shine as they did here—granting they have been saved by grace—above the rest of the redeemed? or does it mean that they contributed of their substance for Gospel ordinances here, to be a means of preparing sinners for heaven, which is the greatest “glory and honour” they could bring into it? We consider that the latter is the meaning, and that as there is no distinction in heaven but what grace makes, the kings bringing “their glory and honour into it” means that they used their influence of high social position and wealth to bring the Gospel to bear upon sinners, that they might be saved and brought to heaven, which is equivalent to “bringing their glory into it.” And whether it may be now that kings use their influence thus or not, we have no doubt that, in the Millennium, this will be the case, and that it will be the chiefest “glory and honour” of kings to encourage Missionaries and Gospel ordinances, that a seed may be preserved for Christ and that souls may shine in heaven as one part of the essence of happiness.

5. The safety of its inhabitants. “The gates shall not be shut at all by day.” There is no fear of an enemy coming to annoy them, and the consequence is, no call for the gates to be shut. Besides, “there is no night there.” An enemy is not likely to come in daylight to steal on people by surprise. But here “there is no night,” and no cause for surprise. Well might the gates be constantly kept open, for the city was surrounded by a wall “great and high,” that if the enemy did approach he had no prospect

of success. There is an idea, perhaps, at the bottom, which is the chief one in the text, and that is *liberty*. Whenever the gates of a city or doors of a house are shut it implies confinement; but here is perfect liberty. The inhabitants "walk in the light of it," and the fact of the gates being open removes all restraint on liberty. Then the wall is for safety without, so that there is liberty combined with safety, and no darkness to shroud them in gloom. Here on the earth is night, after the brightness of the day, shutting us up in gloom, "there shall be no night there." "And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it." A question arises, Who shall "bring the glory . . . into it"? We infer that the "kings" in the 24th verse, as they are the nearest antecedents to the pronoun, are the parties. They have already brought their own "glory and honour into it" (see Note on that verse), and now they "bring the glory and honour of the nations into it." How do they do this? By encouraging the nations in religion, and themselves setting an example of it. Take the example of the Queen of Madagascar in her day, as a case in point. For a considerable part of her reign that island was a land of idolatry. The Queen became a convert herself, and by her encouraging the Christian religion and Missionaries, and setting a godly example to her subjects, there soon sprang into existence 3,000 preachers and 400,000 professing Christians. The great glory and honour of a nation lie in souls being saved. "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people." And when kings, through their instrumentality, bring souls to heaven, by encouraging the preaching of the Gospel, and giving of their substance for this purpose, and setting themselves an example of godliness, it may be said emphatically, they "bring the glory and honour of the nations into it."

6. The purity of heaven. "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth . . . but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

(1) Whatever is defiled is excluded. This means anything that is impure in thought, word, or action. Here our thoughts are impure. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts," &c. Our words are impure. They often "eat

as doth a canker." Our actions are impure and full of guilt. We must be purged from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in sanctification, before we are fit to enter heaven. For while justification saves us from hell and gives a title to heaven, sanctification gives us a fitness for it. Let us plead the indwelling of the Holy Ghost for this purity, for nothing that defileth or that is impure can enter there.

(2) Whatever "works abomination" is excluded. This means bowing to heathen gods, as worshipping Molech, or Milcom, "the abomination of the Ammonites" (1 Kings xi. 5). In a word it means all idol worship dishonouring the true God. And how can they have a place in heaven who would set up an idol on earth in opposition to him who is the sole object of worship in heaven.

(3) The liar is excluded from heaven. All liars shall have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone (v. 8). Here is a warning worthy of attending to. It is twice asserted in this chapter, and surely when the Spirit of God is so positive with regard to it, this sin should be avoided as leading to such fearful consequences. Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for it, to mark God's abhorrence of it, in bringing temporal punishment, here its spiritual punishment is described as excluding its author from heaven, and inflicting on him the second death—the "part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." May God give grace to all those addicted to this sin, and the other sins here mentioned, to bring them to the blood of Christ, God's Son, which "cleanseth us from all sin."

(4) Only those "written in the Lamb's book of life" are admitted to heaven. We have the book of life mentioned several times in this revelation prophecy (Chaps. iii. 5; xiii. 8; xvii. 8; xx. 12, 15) but only here is it called the "Lamb's book of life." Why the qualifying epithet, "Lamb's," is put in here is a question which may be worth noticing. The Spirit of God, by whom John spoke, does not allow him to use words at random, and there must be a reason for the qualifying word. We consider that it is used because the Lamb has a special part to transact in connexion with their admission to this

place. As a Lamb he was slain virtually from the foundation of the world. The word Lamb gives us the idea of sacrifice, which is the ground of his people's salvation, and excludes all merits of their own. And as he had a special interest in their salvation in redeeming them by his blood, he keeps a special book for recording their names. "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels" (Mal. iii. 17). The freeness of their salvation will enhance their song of praise to him for ever and ever.

The question each should put to himself then is—Shall I be there? Shall I be a member of "the holy Jerusalem"? where all is pure and undefiled, and where there is nothing that "maketh a lie." And what is the evidence that I shall be a member? Am I washed in the Lamb's blood, sanctified by his Spirit, and bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit, which is the best evidence,—in fact, the only true evidence, of the Spirit's indwelling? If any one have not this evidence, let him decide at once for Christ, for—"Now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation." The first step to salvation is union to Christ by faith, and after this all the other graces will follow in their train. Another question each should ask himself is—Is my name written in the Lamb's book of life? If not, then "without are dogs and sorcerers . . . and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Chap. xxii. 15). All who have their names written there are the subjects of true faith, true repentance, true conversion, true sanctification. What will it be to miss this salvation? It will be the loss of heaven, with all its honours, glories, and felicities; it will be the loss of everything that is dear to man as an immortal creature; it will be the loss of hope, which is the last refuge of the wretched. All the tears that ever have been, or ever will be, shed, in the world; all the sighs that ever have been, or will be breathed; all the groans that ever have been, or will be uttered throughout the endless ages of eternity, would not make up an equal amount of misery with that which is contained in the loss of one single soul! Well may those who are exposed to this doom exclaim, "What must we do to be saved?" Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved.

God is now willing to accept the returning sinner, like the father of the prodigal. The Holy Spirit is now striving with sinners, and willing to quicken them from a death of sin to a life of righteousness. Christ is still beseeching the impenitent to be reconciled to God through the merits of his blood. Let sinners plead the Spirit to make them a willing people in the day of his power, lest when it is too late they hear the sentence ringing in their ears, "I have called, and ye refused . . . I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." (Proverbs i. 24-26).

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XXI.

1. What is meant by "a new heaven and a new earth"?—Ones to replace the present, which are to be burnt up (2 Peter iii. 10-13).

2. What are we to understand by "a new heaven" here?—A new atmosphere surrounding the regenerated earth, purged by fire if it be the future heaven.

3. What are we to understand by "a new earth"?—A new state of abode, perhaps the future heaven, with God's presence in it.

4. What is meant by "the holy city, New Jerusalem"?—The Church in heaven.

5. What is meant by "her coming down from God out of heaven prepared," as she is represented?—Perhaps coming to take possession of the earth after it has cooled down from burning.

6. What is the meaning of the expression, "there was no more sea"?—It was evaporated by the burning of the earth; and if the earth be the future heaven there is no more call for it, for according to Chap. vii. 16, the heavenly inhabitants do not "thirst any more."

7. Whose is this "great voice out of heaven"?—We think Christ's (compare Chap. xix. 5).

8. What is meant by the phrase, "the tabernacle of God is with men"?—This has allusion to God's presence in the tabernacle of old, in the form of the Shekinah glory, and means that God is present with his people wherever they are.

9. How does "God wipe away all tears from their eyes"?—As a father stoops down and wipes away the tears from the child's eyes, so our Heavenly Father, in love and condescension, wipes away all tears from his children's eyes in heaven.

10. Why "no more death"?—Death, which was the curse of sin, is entirely removed in the New Jerusalem, and there is no longer any fear of it.

11. Why no more pain?—Because no more "death," and "sorrow," and "crying," which brought pain.

12. What are "the former things" that "have passed away"?—Sin and sorrow and death, none of which are found in heaven.

13. Who is this who "sat upon the throne"?—The Lord Jesus Christ, the Judge.

14. What is the meaning of "making all things new"?—"A new heaven and a new earth"—a new state of things, entirely distinct from the former.

15. Why does he tell John to write?—The subject is so important, that he wants John to write it down, so that "he who runneth may read."

16. What "is done"?—The completion of the new creation.

17. Why does Christ, as Judge, call himself "Alpha and Omega"?—These are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, and indicate his existence from eternity to eternity, and that he is able to make "all things new."

18. What is the nature of the promise—"I will give unto him that is athirst of the water of life freely"?—The abundant supply of spiritual refreshment which Christ will give his people in heaven.

19. What is it to "inherit all things"?—It is to enjoy all the blessings of the New Jerusalem.

20. Who are meant by "the fearful"?—The spiritual cowards, who are afraid, on account of reproach or persecution, to take up their cross and follow Christ.

21. What is their doom, and those in the catalogue of crime with them?—"The lake that burneth with fire and brimstone," which, in the case of persons, is "the second death," or eternal punishment.

22. What was their first death?—The death of the body; but this is the punishment of soul and body for ever and ever, as in the case of Satan (Chap. xx. 10).

23. Who were "the seven angels" who had the "vials"?—The ministers of the Gospel, as we saw in the 16th Chapter.

24. Which is the one who showed to John the bride, the Lamb's wife?—Likely John the Baptist.

25. Who is "the bride, the Lamb's wife"?—The redeemed Church, purchased with the Lamb's blood.

26. What was this "great and high mountain"?—Probably the Gospel Church elevated above the world.

27. Why is the Church called "that great city"?—Great, in the esteem which God sets upon her, when he sent his Son to redeem her; and great, in the number of her redeemed ones.

28. Why is she called "the holy Jerusalem"?—Because washed

in the blood of the Lamb, and sanctified by his Spirit, she is "holy and without blemish" (Ephes. v. 27).

29. What is meant by her "descending out of heaven from God"?—(See answer to 5th Question, above.)

30. What is meant by her "having the glory of God"?—The gloss, or the glory of God, reflected on her. She appears comely in Christ's righteousness.

31. What is the peculiarity of the "jasper stone"?—It was susceptible of a very high polish, and was one of the precious stones in the high priest's breastplate (Exod. xxxix. 13).

32. What is meant by the "wall great and high"?—This denotes the perfect security of the redeemed Church, "the holy Jerusalem," enclosed within.

33. Why is the number of "gates" represented as "twelve"?—To show the abundant room for entrance into the New Jerusalem, and in accordance with the number of the twelve tribes.

34. Why "twelve angels"?—One at every gate, representing ministers, pointing out the way for sinners to enter heaven, through the way, or the "gate," Christ Jesus.

35. What is the meaning of the "names written thereon"?—The type appears to be taken from Ezek. xlviii. 31-35; and as the type is met completely in the antitype of the New Jerusalem of the redeemed, her gates are marked with their names.

36. Why are the gates represented in the four quarters?—To show that heaven is open to all comers.

37. Why has "the wall twelve foundations"?—Referring, probably, to the twelve Apostles as the founders of the Christian Church (Ephes. ii. 20).

38. Why are "the names of the twelve Apostles" in the foundations?—To show that the Church was built upon their teaching.

39. Why is Christ called here "the Lamb"?—As being slain for his redeemed Church from the foundation of the world.

40. Who is he who "talked" here with John?—Likely John the Baptist. (See answer to Question 24, above.)

41. Why is John commanded to measure the temple (Chap. xi. 1), and the "angel" to do it here?—In the above Chapter, the temple refers to the Church on earth, and a man in the body can measure it; here, it is the temple in heaven, and it requires one out of the body to do so.

42. What is meant by the "golden reed"?—As gold is pure and perfect, so the golden reed, to measure the Church above, shows her perfection and purity, through Christ's blood and Spirit.

43. Why is the city represented as lying "four-square, with the length as large as the breadth"?—To mark its security against every onslaught of the enemy, and the safety of all within.

44. What is the meaning of its being "twelve thousand furlongs

in length and breadth and height " ? — To denote its capacity for holding the " great multitude which no man could number " (Chap. vii. 9).

45. What does the measure of the wall indicate ? — Its greatness, and the security of those within. (See answer to Question 32, above.)

46. What is the length of the cubit ? — One foot six inches, which would leave the wall 216 feet high, but this is to be understood figuratively, for no human measure is applicable to heaven.

47. What is meant by " the measure of a man " ? — From the elbow to the end of the middle finger.

48. Why does John say the measure " of the angel " ? — To connect the angel, now out of the body, with being once a man, — probably John the Baptist, as we have conjectured.

49. Why is " the building of the wall " represented as " of jasper " ? — Not only is the jasper capable of a very high polish, as we have seen, but it was a species of quartz rock, hard and durable, implying the perfect security of those within.

50. Why are the city and the street of it (verse 21) represented of " pure gold " ? — Because the lid of the ark, typifying Christ's propitiatory sacrifice for his people, and the cherubim standing on it, representing his redeemed ones, were of pure gold, and all of a piece ; so here, the ground-work on which the city stands, and the city which composes the redeemed ones, may be said to be of gold, and all of a piece, and shall shine like unto clear glass for ever and ever.

51. Why were " the foundations of the wall of the city " divided into twelve parts ? — Corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel.

52. Why are the foundations composed exclusively of precious stones ? — To mark their security as well as preciousness, as all precious stones are remarkable for their hardness and durability.

53. What does this teach us about heaven ? — The security of those within the wall.

54. What are we to understand by the " gates " of heaven being " twelve " ? — To show that there is an entrance to heaven for each of the twelve tribes, representing the world.

55. Why are they said to be composed of " pearls " ? — To represent their beautiful appearance, and typically the beauty of Christ, through whom the redeemed pass to heaven.

56. Why was " the street of the city of pure gold " ? — (See answer to Question 50, above).

57. Why is heaven here represented without " a temple " ? — Because the temple was typical, and now all its requirements are fulfilled by the presence of the great Antitype, " the Lamb ; also, by the presence of the Lord God Almighty."

58. What is the meaning of the " kings bringing their glory and honour into it " ? — They used their means and high social influence to bring the Gospel to bear on sinners, to fit them for heaven, which is equivalent to bringing their glory into it.

59. Why are "the gates not to be shut by day"?—There is perfect liberty to walk on its streets and around its bowers.

60. Why is it said, "There is no night there"?—As an enemy generally comes at night, there is no fear of any affrighting them, "for there is no night there," and they are in perfect safety.

61. Who "shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it"?—We presume the "kings" of verse 24, as the nearest antecedent to the pronoun "they."

62. How do they do so?—By encouraging the nations, over whom they ruled, in religion, and themselves setting the example of true religion.

63. What is meant by the expression, "defileth"?—It means anything that is impure in thought, word, or action.

64. What is meant by "working abomination"?—This means bowing to heathen gods, or any worship to a false god, besides the Lord God.

65. Why is the book of life called here "the Lamb's book of life"?—Because the Lamb had a special part to transact in connexion with his people's admission to heaven—in his sacrifice for them. He keeps a special book for recording their names.

CHAPTER XXII.

THIS chapter brings before us some of the things which heaven contains for the cheering and comforting of its inhabitants; also, the angel refusing John's worship; and the perfection and sacredness of the written word.

VERSES 1, 2.—*And he shewed me a pure river of water . . . and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

I.—The River of Life.

The same angel who shewed John the glories of the New Jerusalem in the last chapter, and who, we conjectured, was John the Baptist (see Note on verse 9), is the same—for the narrative is not broken—who shewed him the “pure river of the water of life.”

1. The origin of the river. It came from “the throne of God and the Lamb.” It would appear from this that the “throne” is common to both. Christ is on the same throne with the Father, and this “river of life” springs from the throne where both have their seat. The image before John's mind is likely the river of Eden, which watered the garden and which enhanced the delights of Paradise. And here, as John is speaking of a heavenly paradise, he shows that it too has a river to beautify and refresh it, as a river heightens and enhances the beauty of an earthly landscape. The one was natural, the other is spiritual, for the heavenly inhabitants do not “thirst any more” (Chap. vii. 16). But, in the picture presented to John, the landscape of heaven is adapted to human conception; and to heighten its glory it has this spiritual emblem, which is one of the grandest the eye can behold or the imagination conceive.

2. The purity of it. In earthly rivers there is mud very frequently to mar their beauty and clearness; but

here there is no defilement, teaching us that everything in heaven is pure. The river in the heavenly paradise heightens the conception of beauty, but its purity still further lends to the charm of the scenery. It is as "clear as crystal." It sparkles like the very dew-drops that glisten in the sun. It reflects the image of the trees on its banks in the clearness of its waters, for it is truly a limpid stream.

3. Its effect. It is life-producing, for it is called the "water of life." As trees and grass languish without water, and the soul becomes sterile and barren without spiritual life; so the idea here seems to be, keeping up the figure of the earthly paradise, that heaven would not have that spiritual bloom which is so pleasant to the eye, and so reviving to the other senses, without this "river of life." Natural life, vegetable life, and animal life would die without water; and though it does not give the spiritual life, it helps to enhance it. This seems to be all that is intended by it. It heightens the joys of heaven by the image of its presence and purity.

Christian ordinances here are like a river of water to weary pilgrims as they make their way to Mount Zion. Prayer, praise, the reading of the word and the preaching of it, and the sacraments, are like a pure stream for the refreshing of weary travellers in their pilgrimage journey; and if they have enjoyed this river of ordinances, so refreshing here in the foretaste, what must the enjoyment be of the "pure river of the water of life" in heaven, namely, the graces and the happiness of Christ, which they will enjoy to the fullest perfection in their reality? This will be the very essence of their happiness.

II.—The Tree of Life.

1. Its position. "In the midst of the street of it," that is, in the midst of the city, for the word "it" must refer to the city which John had been speaking of in the preceding chapter. "And on either side of the river was the tree of life." It stood not only in the midst of the city, but on either side of the river. The question arises—How could it occupy so many positions? The banyan tree of India can be extended almost any length by slips

and seeds, and why may not this "tree of life" be adapted to any position of heaven, to suit every convenience? By its occupying so many positions, the inhabitants can enjoy its fruits in all places and in all times, as it "yielded its fruit every month." The figure is taken from the tree of life in the garden of Eden, which was the pledge, or sign, of the covenant, if Adam had kept his contract. Here the heavenly one, which is its complement, is the perfection of life. The terms of the new covenant, which guarantees this, have been fulfilled to the very letter by the surety of all these redeemed ones in heaven; and now the sign of the covenant will never be lost sight of, and the life secured by the covenant will never be forfeited. The idea is figurative, carrying out the conception of the earthly paradise, and showing that the heavenly one is nothing inferior, but is the full complement, and more, of its earthly type. The fact is, Christ is the true Tree of Life, and he fills all heaven, that all may enjoy his presence.

2. Its fruit. (1) The nature of the fruit. It is sweet fruit. Jesus Christ is to his people "the chiefest among ten thousand; yea, he is altogether lovely." He was so to them here; much more is he to them there. They delighted in contemplating his person, as the Father's equal and the Father's fellow; his nature, as the God-man Mediator, "who was delivered for their offences and was raised again for their justification," and whose presence there, as their Advocate, is the ground of their security that they shall never be cast out of heaven, or lose its happiness; his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King—that, as their Prophet, he will instruct them still further in the heavenly mysteries; that, as their Priest, he will still continue to fulfil the intercessory part of his office—"He ever liveth to make intercession for them;" that, as their King, he will ever reign over them as their rightful sovereign, a guarantee for their security against all invasion. Well may the Tree of Life, Christ Jesus, be represented as bearing fruit—spiritual fruit—when it is all these to the heavenly inhabitants. (2) The variety of the fruit—"twelve manner of fruits." This shows that it is suited to all tastes and requirements of God's people. Some of them are older, some are younger; some have different

choices (for heaven does not destroy their individuality), but there is something in Christ suited to everyone, to please and to delight him. (3) Its permanence. It "yielded her fruit every month." The fruit was ever coming, month after month, and as a consequence, is ever fresh. So the beauty and loveliness of Christ, which this fruit typifies, never decays. These fruits are ever fresh, ever in season, ever delightful to the eye, and satisfying to the taste, for "in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Those that were first in heaven have not consumed all the fruit that is found on the tree, Christ Jesus; every new comer finds abundance to satisfy him; and when eternity shall have passed through millions of millions of ages, the fruit of this tree will be as fresh and luscious as the first moment the eye gazed on it and the palate tasted its sweets. Here, on earth, there are different varieties of fruits, and at different times, as winter apples, and some other species of late fruits. Is heaven to be less fruitful, and to have less variety than earth? No; this tree throws all earthly trees into the shade, and "yields her fruit every month," as part of the essence of heaven.

3. Its leaves. "The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." These "leaves," we think, refer to the graces of Christ, which heal and refresh all nations, or those of all nations gathered into heaven. The fruit supplies all the fulness that they need in Christ; the leaves, or Christ's graces, revive and refresh them. Christ is "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person" (Heb. i. 3), and well may his graces, or his glory, shining out, cheer and refresh many a wearied traveller who had come to Mount Zion. In fact all the travellers come there through "great tribulation," and they have "the leaves of the tree," or Christ's graces, as the balm of Gilead, to heal and refresh them. There may be a latent idea in the text that they shall still be progressing in holiness throughout eternity; and as they were sanctified here by the Holy Spirit, in union with Christ, now they are growing more and more holy, more and more after the likeness of Christ,—which the "healing" may mean,—and reflecting his graces, as they shine in his image for ever and ever. The graces of Christ were here

adapted to all, and *sufficient* for all, and so in heaven they have lost nothing of their properties ; they are still suited to the inhabitants, and sufficient for them, and shall be to all eternity.

VERSES 3-5.—*And there shall be no more curse . . and they shall reign for ever and ever.*

“And there shall be no more curse.” For eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil man was cast out of the garden of Eden, and the ground was cursed for his sake ; but we have seen already (Chap. xxi. 3) that the earth had the curse burnt out of it by the general conflagration at the last day ; and now in the heavenly paradise—though it should be the earth purified—there is no curse, nor anything to defile. No curse shall ever enter heaven. It is pure, and shall remain so ; for “it is a prepared place for a prepared people.”

1. The reason assigned for “no curse.” “The throne of God” is there, and where the throne of God is there can be no curse.

2. “The Lamb” is there. God and he are on the same throne. It is called “the throne of God and of the Lamb ;” and there can be no curse for the Lamb has redeemed his people by his blood from it—“He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us” (Gal. iii. 13). The word “Lamb” carries with it the idea of innocence, but especially of sacrifice. He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners ;” but in his sacrificial death he made an atonement to God’s justice for the penalty of the broken law. He perfectly satisfied it, as was evident by God’s raising him from the dead ; and this completely removed the “curse” from his people, and its condemning power. “The curse of the law” means the penalty of the law ; and Christ having borne its penalty “in his own body on the tree,” has taken away its curse from all who believe in him. Well may the saints in glory praise him for ever and ever who has freed them from the curse of the law, and hath made them “kings and priests unto God and his Father” (Chap. i. 6). Some say there was no need for an atonement, that God

is all mercy and does not require it in order to pardon the sinner. They forget that he is just as well as merciful, and that his justice must be satisfied in order that he may extend mercy to the sinner consistently with his justice. In Christ's obedience unto death for his people to satisfy God's justice, God can "be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26). The ground, then, on which the "curse" is cancelled is the satisfaction Christ has rendered to God's justice, and well may Paul say, in Rom. viii. 1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." The very essence of the Gospel is substitution,—the life sacrificed for our life that was forfeited, and that life the life of the Son of God! It was the Lord of glory who was crucified. Our sin deserved death. "In the day thou eatest thereof," says God to Adam, "thou shalt surely die." Adam did eat, and involved himself and his posterity in ruin; for "as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. v. 12). Now God is a just God, and must punish sin either in the sinner or in a surety in his room and stead. Christ becomes our surety by the appointment of the Father, and by his own voluntary choice. He obeys and suffers in our room and stead—rises as the evidence that the debt was paid which we owed, and that God had accepted his sacrifice; and now God can be merciful to the greatest sinner who believes in Jesus, as his justice has been satisfied to the very letter in the death of our surety. The sin, or the "curse," is remitted even when the sinner believes in Jesus, or is united to him by faith (Rom. viii. 1); and well may it be said when he is housed safely in heaven, under the very shadow of him who died to take away that "curse," "There shall be no more curse"

3. "His servants shall serve him." While servants are serving a master faithfully, they need not be afraid of his anger; and surely so may it be said of Christ's servants. They need not be afraid of the "curse." It was not only taken away by his death in their stead, but now in their serving him faithfully they need have no fear

of its penalty. The Lamb, by his obedience in keeping the precept of the law for them in his life, and bearing its penalty for them in his death, has won their willing service, and on the ground of the perfect friendship existing between them they need have no fear of his frown, or his "curse," world without end.

4. "And they shall see his face." "Here we only see through a glass darkly; but then face to face" (1 Cor. xiii. 12). Here, only through a mist; but there, the full blaze of heaven's light shall reveal the face of him who was "wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities;" and gazing on his countenance his people will likely catch up more of his image, and be conformed more and more to the mind that is in Christ Jesus. If they grow more in obedience to him, as they are conformed more and more to his likeness, the bonds uniting them shall be still strengthened, and they shall be built up in the "full enjoyment of God to all eternity." If, when we were yet sinners, Christ died for us to remove the "curse," or the penalty due to sin—that is eternal death—surely when we see his face, and are conformed more and more to his image, we need have no fear of the condemning power of the law, or the "curse."

5. "His name shall be in their foreheads." We had an allusion to this in Chap. vii. 3; Chap. xiv. 1, where marks were specially set on those who were God's own people. The allusion is probably to the man clothed in linen (Ezek. ix. 4-6), who put the mark on those who sighed and cried for the abominations done in the city of Jerusalem. God claimed those marked as his own. So here, they are already called "servants" (verse 3), here he marks them for his own. They render him a willing service; and to show the relationship they bear to him, they have his own name in their foreheads. They had his image in their hearts in regeneration; here it is visible to all. It is seen, and is the evidence of their open profession. In the early history of the Church believers received the seal of baptism as an open profession of their attachment to Christ's cause, often amidst the greatest persecution, and nearly as often the sign of a baptism unto death—for this baptism marked them.

out for death by their persecutors. They were not ashamed to confess Christ then, and have the seal of his profession attached to them. Now he is not ashamed of them, but gives them the privilege to have his name "in their foreheads."

6. "And there shall be no night there." They shall never be troubled with darkness. Death, or the "curse" due to sin, and darkness, are two of the most melancholy things that cloud the world here. In heaven they are removed for ever. Not only shall there "be no more curse," but no more darkness. "There shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light." Here they needed a candle by night, and the light of the sun by day. These requisites are dispensed with in heaven, for they are not needed there, and the reason assigned is, "The Lord God giveth them light." Every spiritual luxury, to use such an expression, is supplied in heaven to make its inhabitants happy. Surely when they have the presence of the "Lord God," they have no need of natural or artificial light. Now the "curse" is banished; now darkness is banished; now the sun is superseded by that better sun, for "the Lord God giveth them light." "And they shall reign for ever and ever." This makes heaven's happiness complete—the very essence of happiness—that it is to continue for ever. There shall be no interruption to this happiness, no cessation, but it shall flow on like a perennial stream throughout the endless ages of eternity. Surely such a prospect, such a happiness, is worthy the most earnest efforts to secure it; and it may be attained by a simple faith in the merits of a crucified Redeemer. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 36).

But there is, we think, a further idea involved in the text than merely to enjoy the happiness of heaven for ever. It is said, "They shall reign for ever and ever." This implies dignity, and excludes servitude. It is not in the capacity of slaves that they serve the Lamb for ever, but in the capacity of kings. They "reign with him." And perhaps this is the reason why John uses the word "reign,"

to guard against the idea that while they had his name in their foreheads, it was not as slaves—as the Pagans branded their serfs—but as kings to reign with him, “heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ” (Rom. viii. 17).

This last expression seems to terminate the vision of the holy seer in the isle of Patmos. The remainder of the chapter refers principally to the truthfulness of the vision; to the announcement of Christ’s speedy appearance, and the exhortations to be ready for it, by coming to him and accepting him; and the doom of those who are found out of him, or not united to him, when he comes.

VERSES 6-9.—*And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true worship God.*

These verses set forth the *truthfulness* of John’s narrative. Though the preceding events were presented to John in the form of a vision, they are not dramatic or visionary, to float away with the passing thought. No, they are true, and real, and permanent. “These sayings are faithful and true.”

I.—The truthfulness of John’s sayings, and of the Scriptures as a whole.

“And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true.” That is, the same angel who showed John the former things asserts the truth of the narrative, or the vision. There is no falsification with God, or deception in his statements. Two lines of argument are generally used to prove the truth of the Scriptures.

1. The Old Testament canon is confirmed by a translation—the Septuagint—of its several books out of the Hebrew into the Greek, about 280 years before Christ. The Jews must have believed these books to be genuine when they took such trouble to have them thus translated, and when the translation corresponds exactly with the ancient Hebrew originals. Christ confirms the canon of the Old Testament in Luke xxiv. 44, when he says,

“That all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me.” These were the divisions of the sacred books which were known to exist among the Jews. Besides, the New Testament writers must have firmly believed in the truth of their statements when they so often quote from them. Jesus Christ and his disciples frequently refer to the canonical books of the Old Testament, or the books which we have in our Authorized Version, while they do not once quote from the Apocrypha. Some books called the Apocrypha—meaning to creep in by stealth—have been printed and inserted in some old Bibles between the Old Testament and the New. These are recognized by the Church of Rome as genuine. They are called the books of the Maccabees, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, &c. We say they have no right to be among the sacred books composing the canon, and we reject them for the following reasons:—The Jews never recognized them; they were never written in Hebrew; they were written posterior to the time of Malachi, and Christ and his Apostles never quote from them. Then the truth of the New Testament canon is confirmed by manuscripts, versions, or translations, and the Fathers. There are thousands of manuscripts of the New Testament, containing exactly the same books as we have in our Authorized Version. Several hundreds of these have been collected by Kennicot, and other learned authors; and while there are several various readings, which are the faults of transcribers copying them before the invention of printing, there is no distinct difference in doctrine, or precept, or narrative, to mar the general harmony. Then again, versions, or translations, of these books were made for the use of others speaking different languages from the Greek, in which the original New Testament was written. These agree with the copy from which they were made; and though the copy might be lost, the translation, or version from it, would prove the truth of its statement. Further, the Fathers of the first three or four centuries quote so frequently from these books of the New Testament, that it has been said, “If the New Testament were lost the quotations of the Fathers would supply its place.”

2. The second general line of argument to support the truth of the Scriptures is, that the writers *saw* what they wrote, or had it from competent witnesses. Moses saw much of what he wrote; he saw the bush burning; he saw the discomfiture of Amelek by Joshua, when his hands had to be held up, and he is told by the Lord (Exod. xvii. 14) to "write this for a memorial in a book." Besides, what he did not see could be communicated to him, by its being handed down from the time of Adam. Before the sacred books were written God made known his will to the Patriarchial age—to the Church then—by immediate revelation. And the long lives of the Patriarchs enabled them to convey this knowledge from generation to generation. For example, two persons could transmit it from Adam to Abraham, as Methuselah lived over 300 years with Adam, and Shem lived almost 100 years with Methuselah, and above 100 years with Abraham. No doubt Abraham made known the narrative to Isaac; Isaac, to Jacob; and Moses could have received it from some of the latter's descendants. Then we are to remember that he was under the inspiration of God, and kept from falling into error in his narrative; and what he received in the Mount was by direct communication from God himself. His narrative must have been true when the Lord commands him to "write it for a memorial in a book." Ezekiel saw the living creatures. Daniel saw the four great beasts in a vision, and wrote what he saw (vii. 1-3). Zechariah saw the flying roll (v. 1, 2). Peter saw what he wrote, and so did Paul, or heard it from authentic sources. The disciples saw the empty sepulchre, and Christ himself several times after his resurrection, and others with them, even five hundred at one time. Besides, many of them sealed their testimony with their own blood. Peter did so, and Paul did so. And in the Old Testament Isaiah sealed the truth of his statement with his blood. The external evidences, miracles and prophecy, and the internal evidences, the purity of the doctrine, the consent of the parts, &c., confirm the truth of the Bible still further. Not only is the Bible true, but it is inspired. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 21); and this inspiration extends not

only to the ideas, but to the very words (1 Cor. ii. 13). This is called plenary, or verbal inspiration, as the very words were suggested to the writers by the Holy Spirit. An objection has been brought against verbal inspiration, that it would destroy the freedom of men's own speech, and constrain them to use the words dictated by the Spirit, as if they were mere machines. This is not the case: for men think in words; and as Paul, a finished scholar and philosopher, would think in a different set of words from John, the plain unlettered Christian, the Spirit brings no pressure to bear on their minds, but suggests to each the words he was accustomed to think in. We may then rest satisfied with the truth of John's statements, besides with the whole of the inspired record. Though we would not say that inspiration extends to a translation, yet, where it is correct, it has the force of the original, as Paul, in Rom. xv. 10, quotes the very words of the Septuagint, or Greek translation.

II.—John's faithfulness.

He recorded what he saw and heard (verse 8). "And I John saw these things, and heard them." John, as Samuel of old to Eli (1 Sam. iii. 18), recorded honestly and candidly the whole of the vision, so far as revealed to him, which should be a lesson to all servants to be faithful to their masters, and all ministers to make known to their people the whole truth, so far as they know it themselves. John kept back nothing. Ministers are to make known the whole counsel of God, so far as he hath revealed it to them. "The Lord God of the holy prophets" is Jesus Christ, the King and Head of his Church, who communicates to the prophets, by the Spirit, for the benefit of the Church, what he sees for her good and his own glory. And he here carries on his communication with John, through the interposition of "his angel," in all probability the Baptist, represented as a man, or a fellow-servant (verse 9). Why is it said, "to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done"? when there was none present but John himself. The meaning seems to be that they were revealed to John first, and then by him they were to be revealed to others who would follow

him. "The things which must shortly be done," are the fulfilment of the events seen in the vision. And however slowly they may travel, in our estimation, "as one day is with the Lord as a thousand years," yet they will be accomplished.

"Behold, I come quickly." We may understand the angel still telling to John what Christ had commissioned him with, that in addition to the events being shortly fulfilled, he himself would come quickly to carry them out. What were some of the things which were shortly to come to pass, or "must shortly be done"? We think the overthrow of Romanism and Mahometanism, and whatever obstructed the progress of the Gospel kingdom, that he might be rightful King in his own kingdom, and have "the heathen given to him for his inheritance and the uttermost ends of the earth for his possession." We are not to infer that he is to come personally and reign, but by the power of his Holy Spirit to subdue the nations unto himself, till every thought is brought into subjection to him.

"Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." There is a blessing promised here to the man who observes the statutes laid down in this book, which may be termed the Bible summarised. Many of the Old Testament statements pointed forward to it, and many of the New have their embodiment in it. The man, then, who walks by the rules laid down in this book may be set down as keeping the whole law of God. The book of the Revelation, or the Apocalypse, comes in at the close of the canon of the Scriptures as a summary of the whole, or briefly embodying the whole. As in a sermon, when all the points are taken up and discussed and enforced, then there is a summary of the whole, to impress on the hearers the outline, and to leave an impression on the memory that it may not be forgotten; so the last book of the Bible summarises the whole, and before the reader gives up its perusal it appeals strongly to his memory of the importance of the facts stated, that they may not be forgotten. Christ says, "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."

III.—John's folly in bowing down to the angel.

"And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things." In Chap. xix. 10, it is said, he "fell at his feet to worship him," where, commenting on this passage, we expressed the opinion that this angel was probably John the Baptist, who calls himself here (verse 9), "John's fellow-servant, and of his brethren the prophets." There he refused the worship, here he refuses it also. "Worship God." This tells strongly against saint or angel worship in the Roman Catholic Church. It will not do for that Church to make a distinction, as it does, between *Latria* (worship due to the true God), and *Doulia* (worship to inferior beings); the Word of God makes no distinction. And though the word *προσκυνεσις* means worship, which is applied sometimes to creatures (Matt. iv. 9; Rev. xiii. 4), and is here offered to the angel, he refuses to accept such worship as is involved in it, and says, "Worship God."

IV.—John's reproof for his folly.

"See thou do it not." The angel assigns the reason why he should not worship him, "I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book." He intimates here that he is a creature like John himself, one of "the prophets," and of them, or connected with them, who are still alive and "keep the sayings of this book." The acquaintance of the angel with the Bible, which reveals the mind of God, kept him from the error of receiving John's homage. And if the Roman Catholic Church, and many others, made themselves better acquainted with the Bible they would neither give worship to creatures, nor, with the angel, allow creatures to be worshipped. The angel not only knew the mind of God, as revealed in the Bible, but acted in accordance with that mind—he refused the worship which was due to God alone. This teaches us a lesson that those who are to be the instructors of others should know the mind of God, or the will of God, and do it. God does not send one uninitiated to instruct John in what was to

come to pass. Ignorance of the Bible leads to false doctrines and false practices. God claims all the allegiance of the hosts below and the hosts above. "My glory," says he, "will I not give to another; neither my praise to graven images" (Isa. xlii. 8). "Worship God."

VERSES 10-12.—*And he said unto me, seal not the sayings . . . to give every man according as his work shall be.*

1. The first reason assigned for sealing not the "prophecy of this book" is, that it is a standard of judgment, and is to be kept open, to leave men inexcusable. It has been already called (verse 6) "faithful and true." It points out the ground of the sinner's salvation, viz., the obedience of Christ unto death in our room and stead; the instrument of a sinner's salvation, faith; the origin, or source, of a sinner's salvation, the free grace of God (Rom. iii. 24-25). It shows the evidence of a sinner's salvation to be good works, as springing from engrafting to Christ, as good fruit from the engrafted tree. It teaches that the means of a sinner's salvation,—at least the principal means,—are the Word read and preached (James i. 18). And the angel says to John—Keep it open a little longer, that "he that runneth may read," and that he may be left inexcusable if he refuses to read it and learn the things that make for his eternal peace. Daniel's book was sealed (Dan. xii. 9); John's little book was sealed (Chap. x. 4). Why is this left open? To show that the Bible, as a whole, is left open to give men another opportunity of studying its contents, and to cut off the plea of ignorance.

2. The second reason assigned for keeping it open is, that "the time is at hand." The meaning of this is, the time for the fulfilment of the prophecies. It does not mean the time of the end, but the time of the beginning of the end, when the vision would be complete, or the prophecies concerning it. The angel hints to John that it is about beginning to be fulfilled. The vials are to be poured out upon the world, but let sinners flee to Christ from the wrath to come, for there is little time for their escape. "The time is at hand." The blessings also are about to be poured out on the righteous; and deliverance from all

their troubles is to be secured to them. Let them rejoice, for "the time is at hand." The glory in store for the Church, which is to have deliverance more or less from the persecutions and oppressions to which she has been so long subject, is near. Let her also glory in the thought, for "the time is at hand."

3. The third reason is, there is no opportunity of escape for the wicked if this brief season be neglected. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still . . . filthy still." The time between the close of the vision and its fulfilment is short; and if the "unjust," and their fellow-companions in evil, in the meantime remain still in their sins till judgment overtake them in the shape of some of the plagues in the vision, then let them remain "unjust" and "filthy still." It will be said—Is there not pardon for the penitent to the last hour? Yes; we would not restrict the mercy of God or the day of grace. But there is just a possibility of sinning away the day of grace, that when the judgment falls on the impenitent there is not much likelihood of their being humbled by it and brought to repentance. And hence the duty now, and the privilege of escaping the judgments that are to be poured out on the impenitent, by laying hold by faith on the merits of a crucified Redeemer. Let sinners beware of that hardening period arriving, when God says, "I have called, but ye refused . . . I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh" (Prov. i. 24-26). For example, the Jews sinned away their national privileges, and many a man sins away his day of grace to outward appearance. We don't say that man is stronger than God, when he would arrest him by the power of his Holy Spirit, as he did Paul. But this is an exceptional case; and when men refuse the use of the means which God has appointed for their conversion and leading them to repentance, and strive against the Spirit's work, is it any wonder that God would give them over to hardness of heart, as he did Ephraim? And is it any wonder that the Spirit would refuse any longer to strive with them? Men are ordinarily brought to repentance in the use of means—"not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth them to repentance;" but if they reject the means, and refuse to pray for the

Spirit of God to bless them, then hardness of heart ensues as a necessary consequence. The Jews, as a nation, are scattered and peeled, according to the prediction (see Leviticus 26th chap.), and hardened in their sins for resisting the Holy Ghost (Acts vii. 51).

“And he which is filthy, let him be filthy still.” This term means remaining in a state of nature, with his sins and lusts and covetous practices all about him—in a word, still in a state of condemnation and unconverted. The idea is that of a house unswept, where every kind of rubbish and dust had been allowed to accumulate. So with the “filthy,” the heart and mind are unswept and impure, they have been neither sanctified nor cleansed with the “washing of water by the Word” (Ephes. v. 26). The word of prophecy, the Bible, was there, but the man refused to search its records for the truth, and the plan of salvation through faith in a crucified Redeemer, and still remains in a state of ignorance of its contents. He keeps his mind “filthy,” or shrouded in darkness, and will not let the light of truth shine into it. And now, when the judgments of God light on him, there is no time to retrieve his loss. It is emphatically said, “Let him be filthy still.”

“And he that is righteous, let him be righteous still.” “He that is righteous,” or justified, on the ground of Christ’s righteousness accounted as his, when he believes in Jesus, and, as a consequence, acts righteously, has the promise pronounced on him, “Let him be righteous still.” In his natural unconverted state he was condemned, but when he believes on the Son of God he is justified, or made “righteous,” on the ground of a righteousness satisfying God’s law and justice; and now he stands before the law acquitted, and is “accepted in the Beloved.”

“And he that is holy, let him be holy still.” That is, he that is sanctified, having Christ’s righteousness imparted unto him, and having been made holy in body and spirit—not only having his state changed in justification, but his character changed in sanctification—has the promise of holiness, “Let him be holy still.” We have as much need of the Holy Spirit in sanctification to give us a fitness for heaven, as the blood of Christ in justifica-

tion to give us a title to heaven. Let it be ours to be found thus when the Lord Jesus comes, and escape the doom of the "unjust" and the "filthy." There is no purgatory here, no opportunity of improving a misspent life, according to this verse. As with the foolish virgins, the day of grace is past when Christ has come and shut to the door. Hence the duty of being up and doing now, seeking an interest in Christ's work by faith, for he says (John ix. 4), "the night cometh, when no man can work."

4. The fourth reason is, Christ will come, as the Judge, to dispense rewards or punishments according as every man's "work shall be." That is, "according as his work shall be," measured by the standard of this book. Therefore it is not to be sealed, but to be kept open, as the standard of judgment. Paul says (Rom. ii. 16), "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel." "And behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rewards and punishments will be meted out as our lives correspond, or not, to the standard. Men are never said to be rewarded *on account* of their works—for merit is always of grace (Rom. iii. 24)—but they are said to be rewarded according to their works. On the other hand, the wicked are always punished on account of their works (Isa. xiii. 11), "I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity." We get heaven as a matter of favour; hell is always deserved. The book then is to be kept open, that the rewards and punishments may be read, and that men may have no excuse for their ignorance as to rewards and punishments. It will leave them inexcusable, and let them see that it was their own fault if they were exposed to punishment, when the vision was so plain and open that he that "runneth may read." And the reason is urgent why men should read and ponder, and improve the short time allotted to them in this world, for Christ says in the text, "Behold, I come quickly." This is for the reward of the righteous, or the punishment of the wicked, or for both. And he brings his reward with him, "My reward is with me." Neither party has to wait long to experience the result. With the righteous, present death is present

glory. (2 Cor. v. 8) "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." With the wicked, like the rich man in the parable (Luke xvi 23), it is to lift up their eyes in hell, "being in torments."

"To give to every man according as his work shall be."

Not, as we stated, for his work, or on account of his work, but a higher or lower degree of rewards and punishments, as he served God or served Satan. Those that have been very zealous for Christ's cause and kingdom, and have been very self-denying, and have occupied well and faithfully in Christ's vineyard, like Paul, and Baxter, and Bunyan, and Wesley, and Whitfield, shall shine as stars of the first magnitude in heaven. As "one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. xv. 41, 42). While those, on the other hand, who sold themselves to do wickedness, like Ahab of old, may be expected to have a greater degree of punishment, and to have a lower depth in the bottomless abyss. It should be ours to read and learn, and inwardly digest, that through the grace of God, and a saving interest by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we may escape the punishment and reap the reward provided for all who accept his merits and rest on his finished work. There are some who say that Christians are never represented as looking for death, but for Christ's coming. Well, Paul may be taken as an exception to this, and surely he was a Christian, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. i. 23; see also 2 Tim. iv. 6). And Peter might be taken as an exception, "Knowing that shortly," says he, "I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me" (2 Pet. i. 14). And even if the coming here "quickly" should mean Christ's coming to judgment, the day of a man's death is the same to him as the day of judgment, for as death leaves us judgment will find us. Hence the necessity of being ever ready, with our lamps trimmed and our lights burning, and of our making the most of our short day before the vision is sealed up, that when the Bridegroom cometh, in whatever way, we may be ready to enter in with him to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

VERSES 13-15.—*I am Alpha and Omega . . . without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.*

These verses set forth the happiness of those who “do” God’s “commandments,” or rather, “wash their garments” in the blood of Christ; and the misery of those who do not, and are kept without the city.

I.—We have here the eternity of Christ.

He is called “Alpha and Omega.” These are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, and fitly used to set forth his eternity, who was from the beginning and shall continue to the end, throughout all eternity. (See, for exposition on this verse, Chap. i. 8.)

II.—The happiness of those who “do God’s commandments,” or rather, “wash their garments, that they may have right to the tree of life.”

It is considered by the best critics and commentators that the correct reading here is, “Blessed are they that wash their garments.” The Greek for “do his commandments,” is *ποιούντες τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ*, from which the Authorized Version is taken. The Greek for “wash their garments,” is *πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν*, from which the Revised Version is taken, which has the reading, “wash their robes.” The expressions in the Greek are so apparently like each other, that a copyist would readily mistake the one for the other. And it is just probable this is what has been done: that the original text was the Greek for “washing their robes,” and that the transcriber has inadvertently adopted the text for “doing his commandments.” It was largely the business of the monks, during the middle ages, before printing was invented, to transcribe copies of the sacred books of the Scriptures from the original Greek or other versions; and, in this way, various readings crept into different manuscripts. For the correctness of the second reading, “wash their robes,” we have the authority of the most ancient codices, or manuscripts, the *Codex Sinaiticus*, and the *Codex Alexandrinus*, with the Latin of Jerome,

and many others of the highest critics. Besides, the latter, "washing their robes," is subversive of the idea of merit, which the former seems to favour. The whole Bible is against the idea of meriting heaven, or "the tree of life," by any doings, or works, on man's part, as it is entirely of grace; and it is not likely that in the closing chapter of the book a doctrine would be broached which is unknown to it from the beginning. I have thus been particular here in assigning a reason for departing from the recognized text, as I have kept to it from the beginning of this commentary. We think there are good grounds for this change here, and I have adopted the reading for "washing their garments." The merit thus is on the part of Christ, our surety, as it is through being washed in his blood we have a "right," or title, to "the tree of life."

A similar expression occurs in Chap. vii. 14, where the saints "have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." They had attained the kingdom, not through their own merits, or keeping the commandments, but only through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ obeying the law and bearing its penalties in their room and stead. "The tree of life" then is not obtained through human merit, but through the blood of the Lamb. This sprinkled on us, which we get when we believe in him, gives us a "right," or title, to enter into "the city," the New Jerusalem, and have a "right to the tree of life." We have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. x. 19).

III.—The misery of those who do not wash their robes in the blood of Christ.

They are left out. "For without are dogs." These mean the filthy and the vile, who spurned from them sacred things, who, like the Jews, would not have Christ to reign over them, but "stumbled at that stumbling stone." They rejected the open vision, and would not read to be instructed in the plan of salvation. They would not accept it through him "who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification."

"And sorcerers." These are the charmers and necromancers who practise magic arts, and deal in omens and dark sayings; yea, who give themselves over to work wickedness. We had this same form of expression in Chap. xxi. 8. (See Note on it.)

"And whoremongers." These are the adulterers, and libertines, and incontinent, who refuse to respect and obey the seventh commandment—who give free reins to their lusts, and have "no fear of God before their eyes." (See Note on Chap. xxi. 8.)

"And idolaters." These are the image-worshippers, the violators of the second commandment, who bow down to images, or inferior creatures, whether saints or angels. God alone is the object of worship, and he says, "My glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images" (Isa. xlii. 8).

"And whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." We have, in this catalogue of criminals who are left out, the violators of the first and second tables of the Law, who neither do their duty to God nor their duty to man. Here the liars, who falsify or "bear false witness against their neighbour," are classed with the other outcasts, and are left to the fate of the devouring fire, "which is the second death" (Chap. xxi. 8). This should be a warning to us to set a guard upon our lips that we offend not with our tongue. James says (iii. 8), "The tongue is an unruly member, full of deadly poison." "Our speech should be always with grace, seasoned with salt;" and our conversation should be always such "that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Col. iv. 6; Eph. iv. 29). We should then examine ourselves whether we are among those who have "washed their robes" in the blood of Christ, and who "have right," or title, "to the tree of life," or among those who are to be cast out; and, if among the latter, to fly at once to the only refuge of sinners, "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world."

VERSES 16-18.—*I Jesus have sent mine angel . . . God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.*

We have four things set before us in these verses—

I.—The truth of the prophecy.

It is testified to by the angel, who has his commission from Christ, the King and Head of the Church. This angel is the angel of the 6th verse. There he is represented as shewing "the things which must shortly be done." Here he is testifying to the truth of them. The testimony of a competent witness in a court of justice is looked upon as authentic; here the angel gives his testimony by a Divine commission, "in the Churches," before the world. He gives it for the benefit of the Churches, and surely it is worthy of credence and to be believed. The Churches that neglect to believe this prophecy must remain in darkness while the light is flashing around. Peter compares the prophecy to a light shining "in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in our hearts" (2 Pet. i. 19). And the meaning is that when the "day star," Jesus Christ, who is called here by John the "morning star," would appear, he would give it more significance by reflecting his light on pages of it which were dark. And so now, in the Gospel day, we may see dark prophecies fully verified. It was prophesied of Ishmael that he would be "a wild man; his hand would be against every man, and every man's hand against him" (Gen. xvi. 12), and this has been fulfilled to the very letter. The wandering Arabs, the descendants of Ishmael, are robbers by land and pirates by sea; and though they have dwelt for generations in the presence of European nations, they are as wild as they were thousands of years ago, and a traveller describing one of their tents says, "Such must have been their condition for 3,000 years." In passing over the deserts of Arabia inhabited by this race, travellers have to go in caravans, armed as for war, against these freebooters.

Of the Jews it was prophesied (Lev. xxvi. 33) that they would be "scattered among the heathen; that God would draw out a sword after them; that their land would be desolate and their cities waste," &c. And this, as we know, has been fulfilled to the letter. They have been scattered through all nations of the world, and there is no country which they can claim as their own.

Of Babylon it was said (Isa. xiii. 19, 20), that it would be waste and desolate, and a complete ruin. This, we know, has also been fulfilled to the very letter, testifying to the truth of the prophecy. And when these and other prophecies which might be mentioned have been fulfilled, it is presumptive evidence that the others will yet be fulfilled. And in all probability in the Millennium, when the "bright and morning star" shines over a regenerated world, all the prophecies shall have their fulfilment, and the "morning star" shall culminate in the Sun of Righteousness, enlightening the spiritual world by the glory of his beams.

II.—The design of the prophecy.

It is for the benefit of the Churches. And the angel is to testify these things "in the Churches," or for the benefit of the Churches.

1. The Churches are the depositories of the prophecy, and no wonder that the angel is commissioned by the King and Head of the Church to state these things for their benefit. The Churches here are the seven Churches mentioned at the beginning of this book; but while plural in number, they are one in doctrine and discipline. So now, however diversified the Churches are, and however numerous, there is but one true Church, of which Christ is the Head, and all its members are members of his mystical body, for whom he gave himself unto the death (Ephes. v. 25-27).

2. The ministers of the Church proclaim this prophecy. "The priests' lips should keep knowledge." The Lord Jesus Christ, when he ascended on high, "gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephes. iv. 11, 12). As the officers of Christ, they make known to the Church and to the world the promises and threatenings contained in the Bible—of pardon to the penitent and punishment to the ungodly. They hold out a message of peace to the returning sinner, through the merits of a crucified Redeemer; but of woe to the wicked, who reject the overtures of mercy.

3. This prophecy, or revelation, is the means God ordinarily uses, in the Spirit's hands, for the conversion of sinners, in awakening them and bringing them to Christ (James i. 18). Hence the importance of reading and hearing the Word. The Spirit uses the Word as the means to convince and to convert and to sanctify. And those who absent themselves from the house of God, and refuse to read and hear the Word, and avail themselves of the means of grace which God has appointed for their salvation, are severing the means from the end and shutting themselves out from the blessings which they might otherwise enjoy. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. x. 17).

III.—The subject of this prophecy: Jesus Christ, the "root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." Jesus here asserts his humanity from David, but, at the same time, his divinity as "the bright and morning star." Thus he is represented as illuminating all prophecy. Paul shows (Rom. i. 3) how Jesus Christ is descended from David, according to the flesh, but "declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." He combines his humanity and divinity, and shows himself to be just such a Saviour as the sinner needs—one to sympathize with us in all our sufferings, as having a nature like our own; but one "able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him," from his divine nature and omnipotent power. Here is our encouragement to draw near to him with all confidence, as children to a father, able and ready and willing to help us. And not only this, but he is able to quicken and enlighten us, as "the bright and morning star." He was David's Lord, for he shone before David was born (Prov. viii. 23). The star of Bethlehem, guiding the wise men from the East, pointed him out as ushering in the Gospel day. He shall shine with greater brilliancy over the Church in the Millennial day, when "the Gentiles shall come to his light and kings to the brightness of his rising" (Isa. lx. 3).

IV.—The invitation of the prophecy: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come."

Now that Christ's divinity and humanity have been established by the prophecy, and his proper qualifications for a Saviour have been laid down on such a solid basis as the Church may build on without fear, "the Spirit and the bride say, Come." They invite sinners to draw near to him. He is able to save as the God-man Mediator. He has done all to save. He is willing to save. It is your own fault if you are not saved. "Come" and be saved, for he casts out none who come unto him. "Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out" (John vi. 37).

The Spirit here takes the initiative in the invitation. He is the moving power in the Church since Christ departed to heaven; but Christ promised, before he left her, that he would send the Spirit as her Comforter. The Spirit was in the Church in the Old Testament dispensation, for "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." But his operations were not to such an extent as in the New. "The Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." That is, he was not given to such an extent. And now that he has come to the Church in such mighty power, as was witnessed on the day of Pentecost, and many other occasions since, as the results of Christ's resurrection and intercession (John xvi. 7), he invites sinners to share in the blessings of such fulness and such salvation as are treasured up in Christ.

"The bride" is the Church, and she is also deeply interested with the Spirit in the salvation of sinners, and joins with him in the invitation. She having the beauty and loveliness of Christ, as her new husband, and the comfort and ease she has found in him, in contrast to what she experienced when under Satan's sway, is anxious that every sinner should enjoy the same privilege as herself, and she says with the Spirit, "Come."

"And let him that heareth say, Come." Whosoever heareth the invitation of the Spirit and the bride, and avails himself of it, will invariably offer the same invitation to others. Every converted soul who has tasted of the joys of salvation will be found, without doubt, inviting others to come to the same Saviour whom he has found so

precious to his own soul. When Andrew, in the 1st Chap. of John's Gospel, "found the Messias" (verse 41), he brought his brother Peter; and when Philip found Christ, he brought Nathaneal. And when the woman of Samaria, in the same Gospel (4th Chap), found Christ, she ran into the city saying, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" This is characteristic of every converted soul. He must be a missionary in some way or other, and he will be. And this is one of the ways by which we may know whether or not we are converted, and have found Christ ourselves, if we are anxious to bring others to him, and are saying with the "hearing" convert in the text, "Come" to Christ, as the only Saviour of the lost and ruined sinner.

"And let him that is athirst come." The soul hungering and thirsting after righteousness finds here a well of water that never runs dry, even the inexhaustible fountain of a Saviour's grace. "Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John i. 16). Other wells may run dry, but this never. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him . . . springing up into everlasting life" (John iv. 14). And any thirsty soul who has drunk himself, will try to bring others to the same fountain at which he has quenched his thirst. Some years ago a caravan was crossing the desert of Arabia, when the water which the camels carried became exhausted and many of the company were dying with thirst. Most of those who were able spread themselves through the desert looking for water, for on this depended the only hope of the life of all. Some are falling down from giddiness and exhaustion. Others, who had more strength, are still pursuing their journey to find out some trace of water. At last one comes on a spring; he jumps forward to slake his thirst, but before he has drunk to the full he remembers the number of his comrades who are perishing. He runs out to the highest mound, and, at the top of his voice, shouts, "Water, water; enough for all! enough for all! Come and drink, come and drink." And as his companions, carrying those that were unable to walk, press to the fountain and slake their thirst, how pleasing is the second

draught to himself, when he sees his friends enjoying the same spring which hath so cheered his own soul? So with those who have found Christ themselves, and have drunk of the life-giving stream which flows from a Saviour's love, they will not be satisfied till they see others drinking of the same fountain where they have drunk themselves; and they will echo the sentiment and invitation of the text, "Let him that is athirst come." There is enough in Christ for all thirsty souls; and though millions have drunk at this fountain, there is room for millions more. It is never exhausted, but is still open for thirsty souls; yea, "springing up into everlasting life."

"And whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." Here is an unlimited invitation. The fountain is not only inexhaustible, but the invitation to drink at it is without reserve—"Whosoever," and free—"Let him take the water of life freely." The "whosoever" includes all who feel their need of this life-giving stream. If we do not restrict ourselves the text assuredly does not, for "whosoever" is as extensive as the four winds of the earth. It is in keeping with Isa. lv. 1, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come," &c. It is remarkable that just at the winding up of the whole volume of inspiration such an unlimited invitation should stand out so prominently before the sinner. But just to leave him inexcusable, seems to be the design of the Spirit of God in dictating the prophecy, and to leave him to the consequences of his own sin, if he refuse such a free and unlimited invitation.

It is also remarkable that in this clause there is the absence of the word "come," which is attached to the preceding clauses. But at a glance the reason may be seen. And this shows us the simplicity of the Word of God and the want of that tautology which distinguishes it from other writings. The Bible never uses a word where there is no need for it, as merely to fill up the diction. And here it will be seen that there is no need for the word "come." "Whosoever" is made willing in the day of God's power has this water at hand. Christ brings it near to him; as near as Jacob's ladder, when he had only to stretch out his hand and lay hold on it. The coming is

the being made willing by the power of the Spirit of God; and the offer of "the water of life" is brought so near to the thirsty soul that he has only to stoop down at the fountain and drink, for it flows in all directions. And then it will be in him, like the water Christ offered to the woman at the well of Samaria, "a well of water, springing up into everlasting life."

VERSES 18-24.—*For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book . . . The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

These verses set forth—

I.—Christ's warning to the Church, and the plagues that follow on detracting anything from the volume of inspiration. God always gives warning before judgment. The antediluvian world was warned of the flood. The Jews were warned of the 70 years captivity in Babylon. They were warned again of the destruction of their beautiful temple by the Romans. The wicked are now warned of the judgment to come—that they "shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." And here is a warning also to him who is found adding to the things in this book, or taking from them, that "God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book, or "take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city."

Here are the two forms of warning :—

1. That "God shall add the plagues that are written in this book." That is, the plagues recorded in the 16th Chap., and the wars, famines, and pestilence mentioned elsewhere throughout the Bible. And we have reason to believe that many of the wars which torment our race, and have tormented it, such as the Crimean war, and the American war, and the Franco-German war, and the Russo-Turkish war, and the war in Africa and Afghanistan; also the famine in Ireland in 1846, and that in China and India; besides the plagues at different times, the great plague in London, in 1665, and that in Ireland, in 1832, &c., have been largely owing probably to adding to

the Word of God. Other visible causes may have operated, but the secret cause may have been on account of men adding their traditions and other mixtures to the pure Word of God. These, with other sins, have brought on nations the retributive justice of God in such dire calamities. The Word of God is largely added to by the tradition of the Romanists, and largely curtailed by the Koran of the Mahometans. Even it is shorn of its splendour by many professing to be Christians, who pretend to tell what parts of it are inspired, and what parts not, helping to incur the judgments that are here threatened.

2. That he "shall take away their part out of the book of life . . . and the things which are written in this book." "The book of this prophecy" is the same as that which is called "the prophecy of this book," in the preceding verse, and means the Word of God in general, as well as the immediate prophecy of this book of the revelation before us. The book of life means, as we have seen in other places of this prophecy, a register, though not in pen and ink (but in God's mind), of those who might claim to be written in heaven. They enjoyed the means of grace—they lived in the clearest light of the Gospel—they had the truth, as it is in Jesus, around them and about them, but they shut their eyes and ears to its invitations and warnings, and refused to be guided by its teachings as to the plan of salvation through faith in a crucified Redeemer; and now, when they might have had their names registered in "the book of life," God takes away their claim, as a judgment for tampering with this book and refusing to be guided by its precepts. It is no light matter then to trifle with God's Word, and add to it, or take away from it, as men please; swift justice will overtake all who act thus. "And out of the holy city." That is, God will also take away the part which he might otherwise have had "out of the holy city." He might have been a citizen of the "holy city," the "New Jerusalem," by faith in the merits of a crucified Redeemer, as set forth in this book. But he rejected the prophecy, refused to learn the plan of salvation as there laid down, and by this means forfeited his right to such citizenship, and God takes away the part which he

might have laid claim to. "And from the things which are written in this book." These are the promises which this book holds out to those who overcome and are faithful to the death. (See some of the promises in Chaps. ii. 7, 10, 17; iii. 5, 12, 21—"the tree of life; the crown of life; the hidden manna; the white stone," &c). By mutilating this book he has forfeited his right to all these promises, and the other promises in the whole revelation of God. These promises are sure to all who plead them, for they are written in the book, and what God writes he will not falsify. But God takes the man's "part" of the promises away, who detracts from this book, and in judgment deprives him of what he otherwise might have had—a part in "the book of life," and the blessings written therein. Had he attended to its injunctions, and learned the way of peace through the blood of the cross, he might have been a participator in all its promises, and all the blessings of the new covenant of which he is now deprived.

II.—Christ's farewell to his Church.

1. It is only for a time: "Surely I come quickly." Jesus testifies here to the truth of the statements recorded already. Elsewhere he is called "the faithful witness" (Chap. i. 5). At the beginning of this book he assents to the truth of the statements, and at the close he reiterates the same. No wonder that the doom was pronounced upon those who would dare to add to the things stated, or take away from them. He asserts with a certainty—"Surely I come quickly." He had made promises to the righteous, as we have already seen, and denounced threats on the wicked; and lest the Church might think (as the souls of the martyrs under the altar, Chap. vi. 9) that he is long in coming for the fulfilment of his pledges, to which he had appended his testimony, he consoles her with the hope, and more than that, with the assertion, that his stay would not be long—"Surely I come quickly." Soon I will come for the final reckoning in the final judgment, "to give to every man according as his work shall be"—a crown of life to them that are faithful to the death, and final retribution to the despisers of my grace, the persecutors of my people and the despoilers of my Word.

2. It was necessary. Christ says (John xvi. 7), "I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." We see here that Christ's farewell to his Church was necessary, in order to send the Holy Spirit for her comforting, for her quickening, and for her enlightening. But, notwithstanding this, he must go away for this very purpose. He promises here that his stay shall not be long; hence the Church may bear his temporary absence, as it is for her good. He will make up for his loss by the presence of the Holy Spirit. A father of a family, for example, wants to improve their condition: they have got into embarrassed circumstances, and he thinks the best thing for them is for him to go away to America, or to some of the Colonies, where he may be better able to relieve them than by staying at home. Both parties agree to the separation, that it is for the good of the family, that the time will not probably be long when he will come for them and take them to his new home, and to a better condition of existence than they now enjoy. So here, Christ and his Church part on the condition that the separation is for a short time—that his absence is for their good, as he is to send them the presence of the Holy Spirit to supply the place of his temporary absence, and that he will soon come to take them to himself, to a better state of existence than ever they could promise themselves here. Indeed they rely constantly on his promise (John xiv. 3), "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Christ assures the Church that his stay will not be long—"Surely I come quickly." The Church responds "Amen" to his promise, and breathes the devout prayer that this may be so, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Let it be, "even so," as you have said, and keep us not long waiting in this wilderness, but that we may go over the Jordan and inherit the promised land.

III.—Christ's blessing to his Church: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

1. The freeness of the blessing. "Grace." This

means a free gift. What is given is a favour, without being purchased by us. So Christ's blessing comes as a free favour, without money, and without price. Jesus Christ, as a Sovereign, can bestow blessings. As Lord, he has all power in heaven and in earth, and he is as willing to bestow the blessings as he has power to grant them. Grace is treasured up in him. He has purchased all needful graces and blessings for his people with his own blood, and out of his fulness they may all receive them. "Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John i. 16).

2. The extent of it. "To all." "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." All need this grace. Without it we are helpless and can do nothing; but, as it is for all, all may claim it, and have an interest in it, who plead it. The prayer expressed by the author of it is, that all may enjoy it. Let us see to it that we are its recipients. Who is it that prays this prayer of the last verse? Is it he who testifieth these things, the Lord Jesus Christ? or John, who is now closing up his prophecy, and breathes the prayer for the welfare of the Church? We consider it is the latter, for Jesus Christ, of himself, has no call for a prayer. It must be some one different from him. And John prays the prayer, and ends with the "Amen," so let it be, or sets his seal to the truth of the prophecy.

And now we have come to the close of this wonderful book. Truly it is sublime and mysterious, containing startling promises and solemn warnings. Faith, much faith, is needed to scale the heights to which it lifts us; and grace, to humble us, that we are privileged to draw near and admire, also to adore. The Old Testament closed with a curse; this with a blessing. The Law repels us; the Gospel encourages us. Let us "draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. x. 22). And let the glad news of the Gospel, which represents "God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," be our sheet anchor in time of trouble. Let us repent of our sins that required such a

propitiation as Christ, and him crucified, to atone for them, and "bring forth fruit meet for repentance." Let us see to it that we are the subjects of regeneration by the power of the Holy Ghost, "shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus iii. 5, 6). Let us see to it that we are sanctified by the indwelling of this same Spirit, in union with Christ, our living Head, who broke the seals of the book, and accomplished our redemption by his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil. ii. 8). Let us give evidence of our regeneration by a walk and conversation becoming the Gospel, and by bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit, as recorded in Gal. v. 22. Let us act as those that are interested in the purity of the precepts which this book and the other books of Holy Scripture enjoin. And may the Holy Spirit be given to us, to let our "light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven" (Matt. v. 16).

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XXII.

1. Who is "he" who showed John the "pure river of the water of life"—The same who showed him the glories of the New Jerusalem in the last chapter, and who likely was John the Baptist. (See answer to Question 24, in the preceding Chapter.)

2. In what way are we to understand the river?—In a figurative sense, as the heavenly inhabitants thirst no more (Chap. vii. 16).

3. Why is it represented as "pure"?—To denote the spotless perfection of heaven.

4. Why is it represented as "clear as crystal"?—Because there is no impurity mixed with it.

5. Why is it set forth in its origin as "proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb"?—To teach us that the throne is common to both, and that all good comes from heaven.

6. Why was "the tree of life" placed in "the midst" of the street of the city? and "on either side of the river"?—To suit every convenience of the heavenly inhabitants, and to be ever flourishing.

7. Why is it represented as "bearing twelve manner of fruits," and this "every month"?—To suit all the tribes of heaven, and to have the fruits ever in their season.
8. Who is in reality "the tree of life"?—Christ himself, who is the Author of life, and the pledge of all spiritual life, through the indwelling of his Holy Spirit.
9. What are we to understand by "the leaves of the tree"?—The graces of Christ, which heal and refresh all the nations gathered into heaven.
10. Why shall there be "no curse" in heaven?—Because there is no sin there, Christ having saved his people from the curse of sin, or the penalty of sin, by bearing its penalty for us (Gal. iii. 13).
11. What is the meaning of "his name being in their foreheads"?—To show his rightful ownership over them, and their relationship to him.
12. Why shall there be "no night there"?—Because night is a time of gloom, and there is nothing sombre or dark in heaven.
13. Why do the inhabitants "need no candle, neither light of the sun"?—Because the presence of the Lord God is a continual light.
14. What is the meaning of their "reigning for ever and ever"?—Because they are "kings and priests unto God," and their happiness is to continue for ever.
15. Who is the speaker who continues the narrative to John?—The angel who is showing John the vision, probably John the Baptist.
16. Why is it said, "These things are faithful"?—Because John was faithful in recording the vision, as shown to him, as young Samuel to Eli, when he recorded it every whit (1 Sam. iii. 18).
17. How may we be sure that these things are "true"?—John states the fact, and he had nothing to gain by stating an untruth.
18. How is the truth of the Scriptures proved?—Besides the external evidences, miracles, and prophecy; and the internal evidences, the sublimity of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of the parts, and the design of all to glorify God. (1) The truth of the Old Testament may be proved by the Greek translation, called the Septuagint, of the books out of the Hebrew into the Greek tongue, about 280 years before Christ. (2) By Christ himself confirming the canon of the Old Testament (Luke xxiv. 44). (3) By the New Testament writers quoting so often from the Old Testament books.
19. How is the truth of the New Testament Scriptures proved?—
(1) By ancient manuscripts. (2) By ancient versions, or translations. (3) By the ancient fathers quoting so often from them.
20. Who is "the Lord God of the holy prophets"?—Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church.
21. Who is the "angel"?—Likely John the Baptist, as we have already conjectured, seeing he was a fellow-servant of the prophets (verse 9).
22. Why is it said, "the message is to his servants," when there

was no person present but John himself?—The meaning is, that John would reveal the narrative to others who were to follow.

23. What are "the things which must shortly be done"?—The fulfilment of the events recorded in the vision.

24. What are we to understand by the expression, "I come quickly"?—Christ would come quickly to carry out the events of the vision.

25. What were some of "the things which must shortly be done"?—We think the overthrow of Romanism and Mahometanism, and whatever obstructed the progress of the Gospel kingdom.

26. Does this book refer exclusively to Revelation, or take in the whole Bible?—We think it takes in the whole, as the whole has its embodiment briefly in it.

27. Is worship due to any creature?—No; God alone is the object of worship.

28. What distinction does the Roman Catholic Church make between worship to a creature and worship to the true God?—She says that *Latria* may only be given to the true God, but *Doulia* to a creature.

29. How is that theory refuted here?—Though the worship (*proskunesis*) which she says may also be given to the creature, is the word used here, the angel rejects it, teaching us that no creature is the object of worship.

30. What are we taught here about the angel?—(1) His knowledge of the Scriptures—that God alone is the object of worship. (2) That he was, at one time, one of the prophets.

31. Why is the book not to be sealed?—Because it is the standard of judgment, and must be kept open as a book of reference, and to leave men inexcusable that they cannot read it.

32. What is meant by the expression, "The time is at hand"?—For the fulfilment of the prophecies of the book—for wrath on the wicked, and blessings on the righteous.

33. Why is it said, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still," &c.?—As the time is to be short between the close of the vision and its fulfilment, there is a warning here to the ungodly, to flee from the wrath to come at once, for once it comes upon them there is no escape; and an encouragement to the godly, that whatever happens, he is safe—"holy still."

34. Who is to be the Judge?—Christ himself—"my reward is with me."

35. How is every man rewarded?—"According as his work shall be." We do not get heaven on account of our works, for merit is always of grace (Rom. iii. 24); but the wicked always get hell for their works (Isa. xiii. 11).

36. What is the standard of judgment?—The book, to those who have it; and it is to be kept open, to leave them inexcusable.

37. What is the standard to those who have not the Bible?—The knowledge they possess, the light of nature, or natural religion (Rom. i. 19, 20; ii. 12).

38. Why is Jesus Christ called "Alpha and Omega"?—To represent his eternity. As these are the first and last of the Greek letters, he is designated by these names, to show that he has no beginning, and no ending.

39. How are we to understand, "do his commandments"?—The best critics consider this an error in transcribing, and that the correct reading should be, "wash their garments in the blood of Christ." This takes away the idea of merit, which the present reading would seem to encourage.

40. What is meant by "having a right to the tree of life"?—To enjoy the presence of Christ in heaven, who is in reality the Tree of Life.

41. Who are meant by the "dogs"?—The filthy and the vile, who spurn from them the sacred things of the Gospel, and who, like the Jews, will not have Christ to reign over them.

42. Who are meant by the "sorcerers"?—The charmers and necromancers, who practice magic arts, and give themselves over to work wickedness.

43. Who are the "whoremongers"?—The adulterers and libertines, who work all uncleanness with greediness.

44. Who are the "idolators"?—The image worshippers, and violators of the second commandment, giving their worship to any other than God alone.

45. Who are the "liars"?—Those who speak falsely, and swear falsely, and violate the ninth commandment.

46. Who is this angel who is sent to "testify these things"?—The same as that of the sixth verse, who we considered was John the Baptist.

47. What is the meaning of giving his testimony "in the churches"?—For the benefit of the churches, and to be published before the world, that what he prophesied was true, and would be fulfilled.

48. Why "in the Churches"?—Because they are the depositories of the prophecy.

49. What "Churches" are here referred to?—The "Seven Churches" of Asia Minor (Chap. i. 20), and representatives of all the Christian Churches to be planted.

50. Who is the subject of this prophecy?—The Lord Jesus Christ, "the root and the offspring of David."

51. Why does he call himself "the root and the offspring of David"?—To teach us his humanity—that he is a man, descended from David.

52. Why does he call himself "the bright and morning star"?—To teach us his Divinity—that he is God as well as man.

53. Why represented as a star?—Because he illumines all prophecy
54. Why is he called "the morning star"?—Because he ushers in the Gospel day.
55. Who is "the bride"?—The Church.
56. How do we account for the absence of the word "come" after "whosoever"?—Because whosoever is made willing in the day of God's power has no call to be invited, as Christ brings the water to his very hand.
57. What plagues are referred to, as "written in this book"?—Those recorded in the 16th Chap., and elsewhere throughout the Bible.
58. What is meant by "the book of this prophecy"?—The Word of God in general, as well as the immediate prophecy of this book.
59. What book is meant by "the book of life"?—A register, in God's mind, of those who might have claimed, but for their own unfaithfulness, to have their names written in "the book of life."
60. What is meant by taking away his part "out of the holy city"?—He might have claimed to be a citizen of the New Jerusalem but for rejecting Christ and his merits, and now God takes away that claim in retributive justice.
61. What are we to understand by "the things which are written in this book"?—The promises which are held out in this book to those that overcome and are faithful to the death and can claim all the blessings of the new covenant.
62. What is Christ's promise to his Church before he leaves her?—That he will soon return—"Surely I come quickly."
63. What is her response?—Even so, come, Lord Jesus.
64. Who prays the closing prayer?—John, the writer of this book.

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